This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

THE TRAVELLER'S LIBRARY.

6000221251

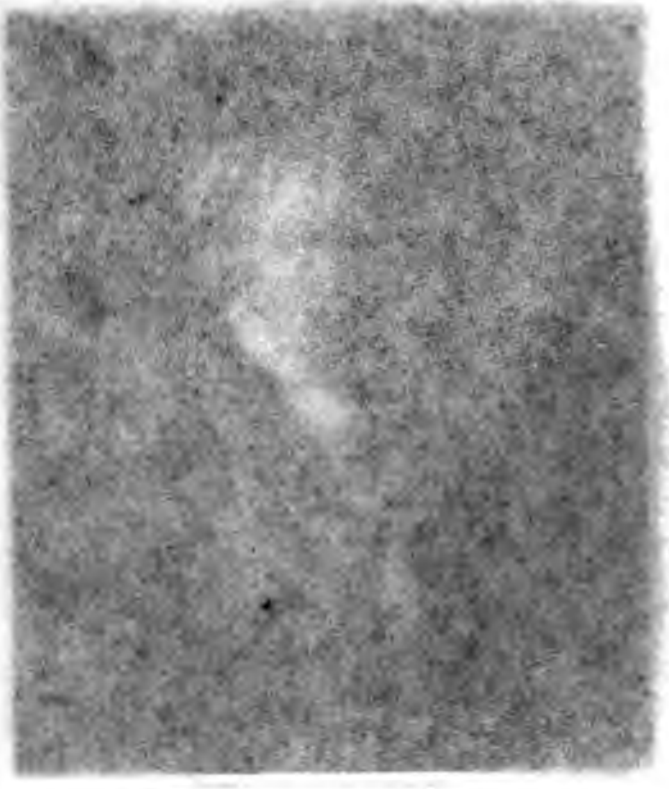
6000221251

Engraved by H. Adlard from a Painting by John Jackson, R.A.

James Montgomery.

AGED 66.

LONDON: LONGMAN BROWN GREEN & LONGMANS.



MEMOIRS

OF

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

BY

John Holland and James Everett.

VOL. IV.

Engraved by H.Adlard, from an Original Sketch

MONTGOMERY,

Moravian Mission Station, Tobago, West Indies.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN & LONGMANS.

PATERNOSTER ROW.

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

JAMES MONTGOMERY,

INCLUDING

SELECTIONS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE, REMAINS IN PROSE AND VERSE, AND CONVERSATIONS ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY

JOHN HOLLAND AND JAMES EVERETT.

VOL. IV.

"There is a living spirit in the lyre,
A breath of music and a soul of fire;
It speaks a language to the world unknown;
It speaks that language to the bard alone."

World before the Flood.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS.
1855.

210. c. 217

LONDON:
A. and G A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-street-Square.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER LIV.

1823.

Page

Letter to James Everett. — To Rowland Hodgson. — Montgomery elected Vice-president of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society. — Delivers the Opening Lecture: Egypt had no Poet. — Letter to George Bennet. — Conversation. — Hieroglyphics. — Cowper. — Panorama of London. — Letters to George Bennet and Joseph Aston. — Conversations. — W. H. Ainsworth. — Future Recognition in Heaven. — Letter to Mr. Aston. — Mr. Molyneux and Byrom's Short-hand. — Equestrian Accident at Bradwell. — Mr. Ray. — Letter to Sarah Gales. — "A Lucid Interval." — Southey's Visit to Sheffield. — Important Questions. — Lecture on Modern Literature. — Letter to George Bennet - - - - - - - 1

CHAP. LV.

1824.

Death and Character of the Rev. Thomas Cotterill. — Subscription for his Widow and Family. — Montgomery's Activity in the Affair. — Letter to Hannah More. — Publication of "Prose by a Poet." — Miss Aikin. — "Old Women." — Conversation. — Chimney-sweepers. — John Wesley and Bishop Foster. — Alleged Increase of Crime. — Murder of Weare. — Magnanimity at the Gallows. — "Climbing Boys' Album." — Contributions to the Work. —Correspondence and Opinions - - - - 34

CHAP. LVI.

1824.

Page

Montgomery reads an Essay on "Meteoric Stones."—Letter to Hannah Bloomfield.—Letters to Dr. Williamson.—The struggling Student.—Collins, the Glasgow Publisher.—Pirating and altering Hymns.—Conversation.—Letter from Southey.—Full-length Portrait of the Poet.—Its Merit as a Likeness.—Minute Criticisms.—Aloys Reding.—Epitaph on the Rev. Dr. Cartwright.—Letter to Mrs. Foster.—Introductory Essay to Cowper.—Calvinism.—Visit to Bridlington.—"A Sea Piece."—Moralising on the Ocean.—Letter to George Bennet - 63

CHAP. LVII.

1825.

Annual Meeting of the Literary and Philosophical Society.—Memoir in "European Magazine."—Conversation.—Formation of Mechanics' Library.—Montgomery elected President.—Correspondence with Mr. Brougham.—Letter to the Library Committee.—Letter from John Clare.—To the Rev. T. Lessey.—Montgomery accompanies Mr. Everett to Halifax.—Conversation by the Way.—Public Meeting.—Sunday-school Meeting.—Illness and Sentiments of the Poet.—Goes to Harrogate.—Letter to George Bennet.—To Dr. Williamson.—School Meeting.—"The Widow and the Fatherless."—Visitors from New York.—Account of their Interview with Montgomery - - - - - - - - 91

CHAP. LVIII.

1825.

Montgomery anxious to dispose of the "Iris."—Mr. Blackwell makes Overtures of Purchase.—Negotiations and Conditions.—Terms of Sale proposed and accepted.—Public Notification.—Letter to Mr. Everett.—Editor's

Page

Farewell Address to his Readers. — Character of his Successor. — Letter to Mr. Holland. — From Mr. Gray of York.—To Miss Pearson.—Poetical Jeu d'Esprit - 117

CHAP. LIX.

1825.

Testimonial of Respect to Montgomery. — Letter to Dr. Williamson.— Public Dinner.— Speeches on the Occasion. — Letter from the Rev. T. Lessey. — Brougham's Letter and Mechanics' Institutions. — Letter to J. Everett. — Publication of the "Christian Psalmist" - - 133

CHAP. LX.

1826.

Montgomery as an ex-Editor.— Feelings and Sentiments.— Francis Quarles.— Electricity of the Body.— Epitaph.— Church-rate Conflict. — The "Airedale Poet." — Montgomery's Kindness to him. — Verses to Mr. Connor. — Phrenology and the Hindoos. — Bank Panic. — Laughing Gas. — Letter to J. Everett. — Visit to Manchester and Liverpool. — Epitaph. — Verses to Harriet Montgomery. — Letter from John Clare. — Sunday School Union. — Letter to J. Everett. — To Mrs. Foster. — To Mr. Bennet - - - - - - - 155

CHAP. LXI.

1826—1827.

Montgomery goes to Harrogate. — Rev. J. W. Cunningham.—Fountains Abbey.—Epitaph on Captain Hewitson. —Local Distress. — Elliott Cresson.—"Voyage round the World." — Letter to J. Blackwell. — To J. Everett. — "Zemba and Nila." — Montgomery elected President of the Philosophical Society. — Lines. — Letter to Joseph Rowntree. — To Joseph Aston. — To Miss Aston. — "Pelican Island." — Its Origin and Progress. — The Pelican - - - - - - - - 183

CHAP. LXII.

1827.

Page

Montgomery at Ockbrook. — Letter to Mr. Everett. — Gift of Poems to the Serampore Mission College.—The "Christian Poet." — Letter to George Bennet. — Publication of the "Pelican Island." — Characteristics of the Poem. — Bible-Society Tour in the North of England. — Controversy at Newcastle. — Testimonial to Montgomery. — Letters on the Subject. — Tobago Mission and Silver Inkstand - - - - - - - - 203

CHAP. LXIII.

1828.

Lectures on Modern Poets. — Pulpit and Platform. — Letter to J. Everett. — Conversation. — Montgomery's Interest in political Topics.—Declines an Invitation to meet Thomas Moore. — Church-rate Meeting. — Conversation. — An Advertising Trick. — The "Tombs of the Fathers." — "Cry from South Africa." — Missionary Meeting at York. —Descriptive Poetry. — Coral Formations. — Allusions to local Objects. — York Castle. — Moravian Missionaries and Negro Slavery.—"Introductory Essay" to "Pilgrim's Progress" - - - - - - - 230

CHAP. LXIV.

1828.

Anti-slavery Meeting.—Memoirs of Mrs. Huntington.—The Poet in his Garden. — Letters about the "Whisperer." — The "Montgomery Gallery." — Letter to Sarah Gales. — Welsh Mountains and People.—Lady Lyttleton.—Letter to Miss Gales. — Conway Castle. — Scenery of Gray's "Bard." — Ascent of Snowdon. — Interview with Mrs. Hemans. — Letter from Sir Alexander Johnstone. — Sir Richard Phillips at Sheffield. — Stopping rural Footpaths. —Letter from Mr. Holland - - - - - 260

CHAP. LXV.

1829.

Page

The "Holy Angels." — Phrenology. — Epitaph on Rev. D. Tyerman. — Letter to G. Bennet. — To Sir J. Mackintosh. — To the Rev. Barnabas Shaw. — "Olney Hymns." — Missionary Meeting at Stockport. — Conversation. — Jonathan Martin. — Sir William Jones. — Letter to Edward Farr. — Interview with Jared Sparkes. — Letter from Mrs. Gales. — "Life of Summerfield." — Walton's "Angler." — Letters from and to Miss Rowntree. — Family Prayer-books. — "Pilgrim's Progress." — Letter from Southey. — Klopstock's "Messiah" - - - - - 289

CHAP. LXVI.

1829.

Arrival of George Bennet in England. — Letter to him. — Letter to the Misses Gales. — The English Lakes. — Descriptive Notices. — Letter to J. Holland. — Original Verses. — Letter to J. Everett. — Conversations. — Home Habits and Incidents. — Methodist Preachers. — "Doctor" Southey. — Official Visit to the High Moors. — Montgomery welcomes G. Bennet at Sheffield. — Letter to Mr. Bennet. — Visit to Redcar. — "Olney Hymns" - - 326

CHAP. LXVII.

1830.

Montgomery in London. — Album Verses. — "Theeing" and "Thouing." — Letter to George Bennet. — Literary Occupations. — Proposal of Sunday School Jubilee. — Introduction to "Life of Brainerd." — Lardner's "Cyclopædia." — Elective Franchise. — Letter to Mr. Bennet. — Conder's "Modern Traveller." — Letter to the Rev. T. Lessey. — Centenary Celebration at Grace Hill. — Letter to Mr.

Page

Bennet. — The "Missionary Journal." — Montgomery delivers Lectures at the Royal Institution. — Joseph Cowley. — Letters to Mr. Bennet. — Verses on a "Little Child." — Monumental Inscription. — Testimonial of Respect to Lord Milton. — Lord Morpeth and Montgomery at the Cutlers' Feast. — Dr. Milnor of New York. — Anti-slavery Meeting. — Letter to Miss Rowntree. — Mrs. Montague - - - - - - 357

MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

CHAPTER LIV.

1823.

LETTER TO JAMES EVERETT. — TO ROWLAND HODGSON. — MONTGOMERY ELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SHEFFIELD LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. — DELIVERS THE OPENING LECTURE: EGYPT HAD NO POET. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — CONVERSATION. — HIEROGLYPHICS. — COWPER. — PANORAMA OF LONDON. — LETTERS TO GEORGE BENNET AND TO JOSEPH ASTON. — CONVERSATIONS. — W. H. AINSWORTH. — FUTURE RECOGNITION IN HEAVEN. — LETTER TO MR. ASTON. — MR. MOLINEUX AND BYROM'S SHORT-HAND. — EQUESTRIAN ACCIDENT AT BRADWELL. — MR. RAY. — LETTER TO SARAH GALES. — "A LUCID INTERVAL." — SOUTHEY'S VISIT TO SHEFFIELD. — IMPORTANT QUESTIONS. — LECTURE ON MODERN LITERATURE. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET.

THE current year was not remarkable for any particular national or local excitement; so that Montgomery's newspaper articles present nothing that seems to bear in any striking degree on his personal history. His anxiety to be out of editorial harness — loosely as he now wore it — certainly did not lessen with a decreasing circulation of the "Iris."

At the close of 1822, Mr. Everett, having become unable to discharge the regular duties of a Wesleyan preacher, in consequence of what is called a "clergyman's sore-throat" (*dysphonia*), was appointed by Conference to take charge of the retail book-shop in Paternoster Row. He accordingly removed to London, leaving unfinished at Montgomery's press the "History of Methodism in Sheffield," a work which was occasionally indebted to the printer for something more than "a careful reading of the proof-sheets." This will explain the opening sentence and superscription of the following letter:—

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Sheffield, Jan. 8. 1823.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"*We want more copy.* These words, I hope, will put you into such good humour as to cause you at once to forgive all past errors of omission, delay, and apparent neglect in writing and printing, though I fear the sight of my hand on the direction of this letter will have roused all the wrath that you can feel against one who, never meaning offence, continually affords his best friends opportunities of taking it. I now write in great haste, and under a weariness of spirit that will not let my heart have play to express its feelings of gratitude for many kindnesses received at your hands while you resided here, and especially for the very welcome token of remembrance in your letter, containing an account of your adventures by sea and land since you left us. In all your future journeyings, so long as I shall be a pilgrim in the same world with you, however distant from each other our paths may lie, I shall always be happy to hear of your weal or woe, that I may sympathise in both; and when I fail on earth, O may my spirit, for the Redeemer's sake, be received into that blessed realm of peace

and love where I should desire to meet all whom kindred, affection, or congeniality of mind have made dear to me on earth! There, if we meet, will be no hurry, no procrastination, no hope deferred; none of those little anxieties and cares respecting little things,—little things that are great to little man here; but whatever we do we shall do well, and in its season. Meanwhile, you must learn to bear with me, for in doing so you will, by that very exercise of patience and practice of forgiveness, in due time become the most placable and forbearing of all good men. Having written thus far with only four words of business, I proceed with further details. . . . Give my best regards to Mrs. Everett. May she and you enjoy all the blessings of the new year which belong to the people of God, and those that will be peculiarly needful and acceptable in your new office!

"I am truly, your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P. S. Miss Gales has not been able to find Cotton's manuscript; — but I may add a new year's wish for you, in which I am sure you yourself will join heartily, — may your number of autographs be doubled before the 31st of next December; and the value of the whole will be quadrupled: and so may they go on for half a century!

"The Rev. James Everett, Paternoster Row, London."

James Montgomery to Rowland Hodgson.

"Sheffield, Jan. 23. 1823.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

I owe you my best thanks for two most welcome letters, and perhaps I ought to apologise for not acknowledging them earlier. But I may say, that if writing to you be one of those obligations which might be deferred to a more convenient season, I have on that very account thought the oftener and the more of you; and never without the most fervent wishes, which frequently became prayers while

I was indulging them, for your welfare and happiness. I cannot describe to you the sensation which your first communication, while yet unopened, excited in my mind; — to receive a letter from you in the year 1823, appeared, for a moment or two, a circumstance as strange and affecting as if it had come from the dead to the living; for the sight of your handwriting and the season of the year carried me back to your sick chamber twelve months ago, when, though I never gave you up (except into the hands of the Lord, out of which I would not have taken you even if I could have restored you to instant health and strength), yet I did sometimes return from visiting you with feelings as if we had parted for the last time in this world. On these occasions, however, I wept rather for myself than for you, fearing that when my heart and flesh should fail, I might not have that clear, simple, scriptural confidence and hope — though humble, full of immortality — which I saw, and rejoiced to see in you. 'So might I live, so may I die, in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me!' was the constant prayer with which I closed your door. But the Lord has been better to you than all our fears, and your gradual restoration to health and strength was watched by none of your friends more anxiously and gratefully than by me. You had been peculiarly endeared to me by our occasionally sojourning together for a few weeks at Leamington and Matlock, as well as our frequent association in the most delightful labours, in the cause of Him whose service is perfect freedom; and therefore I thought I had a right — I will not call it a claim — to be peculiarly interested in your sufferings and in your consolations. Thanks be to God, the latter now abound, and the former, you yourself will be the first to say, were all mercifully permitted, wisely overruled, and graciously converted into blessings, such as you could not have experienced under less afflictive discipline. Your friends here, who received letters from you while at Bath and Torquay, before you wrote to me, were very kind in communicating the happy intelligence of your improvement at both places since you

left Sheffield; had it been otherwise, I should have been impatient to have heard from you yourself, how you were going on, long before I had the pleasure to receive the good tidings under your own hand. Speaking of your hand in this respect, I confess it was partly the clear, decisive writing of the direction of your letter to me, which struck me so powerfully before I broke the seal, contrasting it with the recollection of the feeble and failing strokes of your pen in a little note which you sent me while your illness was yet scarcely past the crisis, in the beginning of last year. I thank you for the ingenious and poetical hint respecting my Blind Slave Ship. It came, however, too late, even if I could have found in my heart to avail myself of it, for when I left Matlock last autumn, I went for a few days to my brother's at Ockbrook, and there I put the finishing stroke to that piece, which had lain untouched for more than two years among my papers. My conclusion, of course, is different from yours, — I fear *not* better. The journal of our friend Bennet's Navigation round the Island of Huahine is exceedingly interesting; but the few words which he says respecting his impaired health, makes one tremble to think how much worse he may have been than he intimates, not only *before*, but *after*, his letter of January, 1832, was despatched. The arrival of the next intelligence may prove the most joyful or the most melancholy that ever arrived (to us, at least) from the South Seas. May the Lord preserve and bless his faithful servant for many, many years to come, both for the sake of heathen and Christians! You have seen a little — no doubt enough, be it ever so little — of the theatrical controversy in consequence of Mr. Best's sermon.

"I am very truly,

"Your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Rowland Hodgson, Esq., Torquay, Devon."

On the 10th of January he was elected one of the vice-presidents of the Sheffield Literary and Philoso-

phical Society,—his colleague being the Rev. Thomas Cotterill, whose lamented death before the close of the year drew from the poet the much-admired and often-quoted stanzas, beginning, "Friend after friend departs," &c.* Pending the preparation of the rooms to be occupied by the Society at the Music Hall, Montgomery consented to deliver an introductory lecture before the members, at the Tontine Inn, on the 21st of February; thus presenting himself for the first time in that interesting character which he was destined so often afterwards to sustain, not only before his own townspeople, but in various other places. This discourse, which formed the substratum of that series of elegant and instructive essays on poetry and general literature, which were afterwards delivered before large and intelligent audiences in the metropolis, and subsequently printed, was listened to with evident delight by upwards of 400 persons. Speaking of the literature of some of the celebrated nations of antiquity, whose political vicissitudes fill so large a space in the page of history, the lecturer said, "There scarcely exists an authenticated fragment of all the learning and philosophy of the Chaldæans, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Phœnicians to give posterity, in the present age, matter-of-fact proof that there were such giants of literature in the earth in those days, as we have been taught to believe from the testimony of the more enlightened Greeks, who, after all, appear to have *known* less even than they have *told* concerning these patriarchal people, and to have recorded vague traditions rather than preserved genuine relics of historical records, which had perished in the bulk before their time. It is almost unaccountable, if there were such

* Works, p. 312.

treasures of knowledge, in Egypt especially, that the philosophers and statesmen of Greece, who travelled thither for improvement, should have acknowledged so little. This circumstance naturally induces suspicion that what they learned there was either of very small value, or that they were very disingenuous in not registering their obligations. Be this as it may, though there is abundant evidence that in manual arts as well as in arms these people of the East were great in their generation, their literature must have been exceedingly defective; otherwise their monuments of thought, no more than their monuments of masonry, could have so perished as scarcely to have left a wreck behind: —

"'They had no poet, and they died.'"

The lecturer uttered the last words with considerable emphasis, adding, "There is not in existence a line of verse by Chaldæan, Babylonian, Assyrian, Egyptian, or Phœnician bard;" and the unrestrained indulgence of an involuntary expression of delight by which the audience simultaneously applied to the poet a compliment paid by himself to his art, was long remembered by those who heard the discourse. In speaking of the invention of letters, he said the Egyptians were allowed to have possessed three kinds of writing, — hieroglyphical, alphabetical, and, probably, as a link between, logographic, of which latter the Chinese is the only surviving example. On this subject, however, the lecturer said it was his purpose to read a paper before the Society on a future occasion.

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, Feb. 6. 1823.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have only as much time as I can hold in my hand, while it evaporates like ether, to say to you, as I do with my whole heart, 'The Lord bless, and preserve, and bring you home again!' Mr. Rowland Hodgson, I understand, has written to you from Devonshire; I have nothing to enclose from any of your friends here, but what I may send even without asking their leave to do so,—their best wishes and prayers for you, all in consonance with what I have already expressed on my own part. I seem to follow you time after time, and letter by letter, as if you were going further and further from me, and rather advancing on a mission through the solar system, than located for awhile at the Antipodes. I am always glad to hear of you, from whatever quarter the intelligence may come; but I cannot help also desiring to hear *from you* once, at least, while you sojourn at the 'green earth's remotest verge.' Can you believe it yourself, that *I* have never received a line nor a word from you since you passed the equator? You did not plunge my memory into the fathomless abyss there, nor leave it on this side, because you have mentioned my name with all your wonted kindness to some of our mutual friends. Of this I will not complain;—it has *so* happened; but I cannot help sometimes repining a little that it has not happened otherwise. I am sure I have not been neglectful of you; this must be the fifth packet, as well as I can recollect, which I have despatched to you by one conveyance or another, with about as much hope of some of them reaching you, as if I had thrown so many bottles into the sea, and left them there to find their way by the drifting of currents to your Pacific Islands. You will see by one of the pamphlets which I enclose, that we have just established a Literary and Philosophical Society in Sheffield. Pray remember

this; and when you pick up a pebble or a weed worth presenting, do send it.* We have just heard that you are recovered from the illness that afflicted you this time last year. Again, I say—God bless and keep you!

"Your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Otaheite."

Feb. 24. We met Montgomery at Mr. Henry Longden's. In allusion to his lecture before the Literary and Philosophical Society, it was, he said, an experiment; and he had never been so much indebted to his school knowledge as on that occasion. *Holland:* "You were, however, almost the last person in the kingdom from whom I should have expected the promise of a dissertation on *Egyptian Hieroglyphics.*" *Montgomery:* "I should once have thought so myself; but I am not aware that any one has noticed the theory to which I adverted. I do not pretend to furnish a clue to the meaning of these ancient symbols—I believe nobody will ever do *that*—but I think I can show *how they were read:* at any rate, my notion may possess a little interest at this moment. I am aware that more than one learned individual believes himself to have found a key to the hieroglyphic symbols, by interpreting them *alphabetically;* but that this phonetic scheme was coeval with the oldest original use of the signs themselves seems difficult to conceive. My explanation is simply this—that *hieroglyphics* were anciently used in Egypt in the same way that they have been used elsewhere, even in modern times by the American Indians, as symbols not of letters or words,

* We shall afterwards find that this hint was not forgotten.

but of *things*, each of which had an obvious general, and a special *mnemonic*, signification."* A gentleman from Taunton came in, and mentioned the death of the Rev. Samuel Greathead. Montgomery bore testimony to the personal and ministerial worth of this clergyman; adding, that he had in hand a memoir of Cowper, with whom, in his later years, he had been acquainted: he had also preached and published a sermon on the death of the poet — the first edition of which contained some particulars afterwards omitted in the reprint. *Montgomery:* "On one occasion Mr. G. lent a great coat to a gentleman, in the pocket of which, he presently recollected, there were several papers, including some original poems of Cowper's. After a few days the coat was returned, but the manuscripts were missing, and were never, so far as I am aware, again heard of." *Longden:* "There seems to be something of mystery about the circumstances, as well as in the character of Cowper's earliest access of insanity; and unsuccessful love has been hinted at as at least one of the causes." *Montgomery:* "It has been said that his melancholy failure of mind in the attempt, or rather in prospect, of the performance of his duty in the House of Lords, broke off at once, and for ever, an engagement to marry his lovely and beloved cousin, Theodora Cowper: but the story, sad on the lady's part, as well as his own, has never been circumstantially told in print, and ought not to be so told during her lifetime."† *Longden:* "Is it

* This speculation is carried out in a "Retrospect of Literature, No. II." appended to Montgomery's "Lectures on Poetry," published in 1833.

† Theodora Jane, second daughter of the poet's uncle, Ashley Cowper, and sister of the estimable Lady Hesketh, died Oct. 22. 1824. Southey, in his Life of Cowper, has gone fully into the

not certain that the poet long afterwards entertained an affection for the accomplished Lady Austen?" *Montgomery:* "There is no doubt of it: and to the society of that lady *he* was indebted for some of the happiest years of his life, and *we* for some of his best poetry." *Longden:* "Is it not to be regretted, then, that he did not marry Lady Austen, and thus secure and increase that happiness?" *Montgomery:* "I doubt very much whether he would have secured it by marriage: for such was the mysterious organisation of his mind, that I should not have been surprised if his senses had failed or forsaken him in immediate sight of the altar, as they did in prospect of the bar of the House of Lords, had he resolved, under then existing circumstances, to lead Lady Austen to church." Mr. Longden produced one of Mr. Horner's prospectuses of that stupendous painting which was afterwards so generally known and justly celebrated as the "Panorama of London:" the artist was engaged making sketches on the dome of St. Paul's; and it was mentioned as a subject of regret, that a poet had not accompanied the painter to describe some of those striking changes in the aspect of the metropolis and in the scenery of the neighbourhood, as well as at a distance, which were witnessed from that commanding elevation — particularly those presented by the early clearness and subsequent obscurity of the atmosphere in a morning. *Montgomery:* "One of the finest of Wordsworth's sonnets, is on the singular stillness of London before daybreak: but its effect is marred by the closing line, which makes one laugh, notwithstanding its profanity—

"'O God! the very houses seem to sleep!'"

---

subject which has suggested this note.—*Works and Life of Cowper*, 1836, vol. i. p. 31.

Soon after the commencement of this year, Mr. Conder endeavoured to persuade Montgomery to resume his pen as a reviewer in the service of the "Eclectic;" but he only used the occasion to ask the editor to bestow a word of approbation on the "Nugæ Canoræ," and other poems of Charles Lloyd, who was struggling to win a better title to contemporary notice than that which he owed to Lord Byron's introduction of his name, "to make a rhyme," in "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers."

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, March 20. 1823.

"My dear Friend,

"You will be surprised to receive a letter from me; for you know my hand even less than my face—rarely as you see the latter. But as it is probable that in the course of Easter-week this phenomenon may make its appearance before you, I write to request that you will have the kindness to send the following newspaper account to the parties. . . . I have too much upon my mind to do anything well,—or, indeed, anything in the right time, which is half of well-doing at least. You may think that I forget you, because I so seldom tell you on paper that I remember you both with gratitude and esteem for many kindnesses shown to me, especially in former days: but the truth is, that my letter-writing age is gone by—never to return, unless youth, the season for correspondence, comes back again. *That*, however, cannot be; childhood, I believe, does sometimes pay a second visit to man—*youth never*. The heart, however, when it is right is always young, and knows neither decay nor coolness; I cannot boast of mine in other respects; but assuredly, in the integrity of its affections it has not grown a moment older these five-and-twenty years.

Accept for yourself, and all your dear ones, this token of the affectionate regard of your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Exchange Herald Office, Manchester."

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, March 26. 1823.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I once more send a line of remembrance and affection to you, and I can do no more at present. Five times, at least, have I forwarded parcels by various opportunities; and such is the uncertainty or the delay of communications to the South Seas, that it seems, by your last letter to Mr. Hodgson from the Sandwich Islands, that you had not received one of these in August last. Long before now, I hope, that on your return to Tahiti you would meet with a month's reading almost from Sheffield alone, which must have accumulated there during your absence, if no miscarriage has taken place in our addresses to you. I fear that yours to us have not been so fortunate. Neither Mr. Boden, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Read, nor myself, have heard from you since June 1821. Miss Ball did receive a letter from you some time ago; but no member of the three families above named have been so favoured yet. Your letters, however, become common property in your long absence, and they travel about from eye to eye, and heart to heart, making all glad on account of your zeal, and love, and faith, and labours in the Lord's cause, and the kind remembrances which each of us in our turn see in your own handwriting to those who are happy enough to receive letters addressed to themselves. We begin to think that *your* heart and eye must be often turned homeward; and though we would not welcome you hither, even if it depended on our decision, one moment before you have finished the work which, treading in the steps of your Redeemer, your heavenly Father has given you to do, yet we would not have you detained one moment longer than

that consummation. Farewell! probably the last time before your return, for how are we to follow your wanderings by sea and land, when you leave the South Seas, if you return by the East Indies, making missionary visits there? Misses Gales send kind regards.

"I am, truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Otaheite."

March 29. Called upon Montgomery in the Hartshead. *Holland:* "I have just been in Derbyshire; and, among other places, have visited Eyam, the mountain-village rendered memorable by the visitation of the plague in 1666, and by the devotedly heroic conduct of Mompesson and Stanley, the resident clergymen of that period. The 'Riley gravestones' still stand, as you are aware, on the bleak hillside, where so many of the victims of that fatal year were buried, and have furnished a title to one of Allan Cunningham's pleasant tales."* *Montgomery:* "I cannot read Allan Cunningham's tales with patience: his descriptions of scenery are often, indeed generally, very happy; but his personages are mostly drawn out of all character: a set of rustic mountain lead miners, from the village of Eyam, never in this world did talk, or could talk, in such a style as he has described. An old Derbyshire woman would be about as likely to talk Greek, as to utter such sentiments as those which the ingenious story-teller has attributed to her in describing the plague." *Holland:* "I confess that I consider the present tale as one of the least satisfactory in the series; exhibiting, as it does, much affectation and little truth of character; but I must persist in being pleased with his story of

* The "Twelve Tales of Lyddelcrosse," London Magazine, 1822.

'Haddon Hall.' Though liable, as perhaps all such sketches must be, to the objection you allege, you will admit that Allan Cunningham has a fine and really poetic mind?" *Montgomery:* "He *has;* and I am only sorry that, instead of concentrating his energies on some subject worthy of his genius, he is prodigally wasting it on such trifles as these: his imagination is fast running to seed—seed not worth gathering, but light and valueless as thistle-down." "Peverel of the Peak" was mentioned. Montgomery thought the title had been adopted in consequence of the pretty alliteration which it presented. "It is," said he, "so characteristic for a fashionable damsel, with an elegant reticule, to go to a circulating library and ask for 'Peverel of the Peak.'" We reminded our friend of this verbal pleasantry on the appearance of "Prose by a Poet" in the following year.

April 16. Mr. Holland called upon Montgomery, who had but just returned from Manchester, where he had been attending a missionary meeting. He said his friend Aston had introduced to him Mr. Ainsworth*, an intelligent young man, who had published a volume of clever verse under the name of "Chidiock Tichbourne." This interview had been mutually agreeable to the parties; and when our friend took leave of Mr. Aston, and inquired the way to Mr. Coward's chapel, near to which he had lodgings, the young poet, overhearing the question, said he would accompany him. This was gladly assented to; and setting out, arm in arm, they took the direction of the streets that first presented themselves, talking, at the same time, most earnestly on literary subjects. After having walked to

* William Harrison Ainsworth, subsequently well known to literature.

a considerable distance — in the wrong direction! — Ainsworth intimated to his companion that he must leave him. "Leave me!" exclaimed Montgomery, with surprise; "I thought you were conducting me toward Mr. Coward's chapel?" An explanation followed, when it appeared that both parties were alike strangers to the town, each taking it for granted that the other knew, and was leading the way! After laughing heartily at their mutual simplicity in thus illustrating the parable of "the blind leading the blind," our friend added, "Well, Mr. Ainsworth, this is a very pretty adventure, and should not be forgotten in the history of your life and mine." *Holland:* "I have been much interested by a sermon preached by the Rev. James Mather*, during your absence, on 'The Knowledge which the Saints may be supposed to have of each other in Heaven.' He attempted to show, not only that the state of things implied by such a doctrine was far from impossible, but that it was highly probable: it was *not impossible*, he said, because neither contrary to the perfections of God, nor inconsistent with the representations of heaven given in Scripture; nor was it, in his opinion, opposed to the highest reason. It was, he added, exceedingly *probable*, from the divine perfections of the Deity, from the divine authority of Revelation, and from the testimony of good men in all ages, as well as from the best side of all arguments on the subject. Now it is my humble opinion that almost every one of these positions is untenable, and the assumptions which the preacher based on them wholly inconclusive: indeed, I think that not only is the common and vulgar notion of such future recognition and intercourse erroneous, — not to say

* At one of the Independent chapels in Sheffield.

heathenish,— but it must be, in its best form, more or less injurious, so far as it seems to countenance, even when it is not actually built on, a presumption of the perpetuity of earthly affections or relations, without which I do not see how the hypothesis can be supported at all — even if it were worth supporting. What is your opinion, sir, on this subject?" *Montgomery:* "I am only surprised that you, or any other person believing the Bible, can hold the probability of future recognition as at all questionable; for while I admit that, as a formal doctrine, it is not asserted in Scripture, I think the sentiment is implied by the whole scope of revelation. There cannot, I conceive, be personal identity without individual recollection: we shall all be judged for the deeds done in the body, and shall be eternally rewarded or punished accordingly. Now to be punished for faults which we do not recollect, or rewarded for works of which we have no remembrance, appears alike incompatible with our notions of equity in either human or divine judicature. Without personal recollection, how am I to know that I am the same person who performed such and such actions — experienced such and such thoughts and emotions — or that I may not have been the Cham of Tartary, or some other individual who lived hundreds of years ago? The happiness of heaven, or the torments of hell — in whatever these may consist — must, in part at least, depend upon our knowledge and admission of the equity of that judgment which shall fix our everlasting state." *Holland:* "I admit, of course, that personal identity must consist in the consecutive recollections of the individual; but you entirely take for granted — though wholly devoid of proof — that personal identity and future recognition are necessarily correlative. So far from that, I submit that you may be removed to a remote part of the kingdom,

or even to another hemisphere; and there amidst all the persons you meet, although you do not recognise and will never meet one to whom you have ever been known before, your own personal identity remains intact — or rather it becomes intensified. Besides, even the enjoyment arising from 'the communion of saints' on earth noways depends essentially upon a personal knowledge of the individuals in the ordinary relations of life, but rather from a mutual consciousness that they participate, but each for himself, of the divine fulness, through their common Saviour: nor do I think it compatible with what *we can conceive*, aided by revelation, that the richest manifestations of the favour of God, either in heaven or on earth, must depend either on the recognition or the recollection of our fellow-creatures." *Montgomery:* "Many of our most delightful enjoyments on earth undoubtedly arise out of our past feelings — our sympathies with others; and upon this principle almost entirely depend the finest and deepest operations of that poetry which most affects the heart; and then in what can you conceive the joys of heaven so probably to consist, in part, as in emotions or expressions of gratitude for past mercies, which must surely be remembered; and in the explaining of those wonderful dispensations of Providence which often appear so dark and mysterious on earth, but which shall in eternity be shown to have been at once merciful, necessary, and all-wise? As every man on earth is originally born in sin, and before he can be admitted into the kingdom of heaven 'must be born again' of the Holy Spirit; and as in a future state of happiness he must for ever remember that there was not only a time when he was a sinner, but also a period when that great change took place in him through believing in Christ, in consequence of which he is now 'before the

throne;' all this will surely be a theme of rejoicing to all eternity." *Holland:* "Be it so. All this may be admitted without in the slightest degree involving, as a necessary consequence, the notion of mutual recognition; but does it not imply that the affairs of our brief existence in this world may furnish matter for development into celestial beatitude through an endless futurity? and although we are told that 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive' of the joys laid up for the righteous hereafter, it is not, I think, either irrational or unscriptural to believe that the glory of God, in the presence of Jesus Christ, will be sufficient to fill and absorb all the powers of the redeemed and glorified saint for ever, without any need of the resuscitating of terrestial relationships." *Montgomery:* "That seems to be a sort of beatific abstraction too much like that aimed at by certain Hindoo and other devotees — a state, of the reality of which we have, in fact, no clear conception, although the length of time which the longest liver spends on earth can bear no more proportion to eternity than the piety of the most eminent saint in the body can to that of the spirits of just men made perfect; still, as it is in *time* that even his *eternity* of happiness must be secured, as well as on *earth* that he first tasted the blessings which are consummated in *heaven*, surely the recollection of these things will not only mingle with whatever constitutes his personal identity, but must run parallel with his existence through eternity." *Holland:* "But I apprehend the hypothesis that saints will know each other in heaven, involves also the recognition — I do not say the renewal—of those relations of affinity or otherwise which subsisted on earth: the husband must know his wife, and the wife her husband, *as such;* a supposition sufficiently discountenanced, I

think, by our Saviour's reply to the captious Jews on a memorable occasion."* *Montgomery:* "There will be no occasion for a resumption of those affections, or rather passions, which existed on earth, even with the knowledge of former relations; because the great objects which they were intended to subserve will have been accomplished. I cannot myself conceive of the maintenance of personal identity without admitting the correlative doctrine of future recognition." In the midst of this debate, Mr. Mather himself was announced, and perceiving that his entrance had put a stop to some discourse, apologised for the interruption. On being informed of the subject of conversation, he stated to Montgomery the heads of his sermon, and repeated some of the arguments which he had used in the pulpit. In the course of his remarks, he alluded, as is usual on this topic, to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, intimating, by the way, that the request of the former to Abraham, that he would warn his brethren lest they also should come into the "place of torment," did not arise from anything like compassion towards *them*, but from a consciousness that his own punishment would be aggravated by their damnation. *Montgomery* (shaking his head): "No, no, Mr. Mather. I have heard you make that remark before, and other preachers have said something like it; but let me advise you never to repeat it. We certainly do not know that a lost spirit can feel compassion for others, nor do we know the contrary; but as *that passage* does not justify us in concluding either way, at least let no one sharing our common humanity be solicitous to impute such an ultra-infernal attribute even to a son of perdition."

Soon after Montgomery's return to Sheffield from

* Matt. xxii. 30.

his missionary tour in Lancashire, he received a letter from Mr. Aston, complaining of the brevity of the poet's intercourse with him during his stay in Manchester.

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, April 10. 1823.

"My DEAR FRIEND,

"Your letter has wounded me very unexpectedly on a point where I imagined I was perfectly secure from causing or receiving pain. There is this comfort, however, that nothing but kindness could have inflicted such a wound, which will therefore heal of itself; and the remembrance will be balm to my spirit, when harassed or grieved with other troubles and vexations, to think I have still such a friend in you as could feel as if I had wronged him because I did not intrude myself upon him at a time when nothing would have been more unwarrantable. You seem to have quite misunderstood the nature of my visit to Manchester, and taken it for granted that I went thither last week of my own choice, and for my own gratification. I went because it had become my duty to go; and I can conscientiously say, that it was taking up a cross from which I could not shrink without being self-condemned. . . . As soon as I could get down to the town, I called upon you, and between ten and half-past two o'clock, the greater part of the time was spent in your society. I made only one visit in the interval, to one of my earliest female acquaintance from this neighbourhood (it took me nearly an hour to find her out, besides the pleasant *digression* with Mr. Ainsworth), with whose family I only stayed half an hour. You know my former connection in business with Mr. Naylor, and my great obligations to him. When you and I parted, I called on him, and had then *less* than half an hour to spend under his roof; *three* engagements at Mr. Wood's and among his friends made up the rest of the day: the next morning I set out for home. So cir-

cumstanced, and so hurried, what could I have done otherwise to meet the kind wishes of my friends? There were claims on me at Fairfield, as numerous and as binding as at Manchester; and yet, though I passed within a field's breadth of the place, I had no opportunity of calling there. I had long ago declined a pressing invitation from a gentleman of some consequence in Manchester, belonging to the Church [of England], to take up my abode at his house when I should come to the missionary meeting; but independently of my preference for Mr. Wood's family, for reasons that must be clear, I thought it right to be the guest of a Methodist on that occasion. I know the largeness as well as the warmth of your heart; but I could no more have claimed the hospitality of your roof on that occasion, than I could have gone and asked accommodation of a stranger. The last fault that either friends, acquaintance, or strangers (and wherever I go, I find some of the latter who are eager to become the former), will ever be able to lay to my charge, is *intrusion*, even where intrusion would not be deemed such. This is an abuse of goodness of which I trust I am incapable, perhaps as much from constitutional timidity as delicate or high feeling. I am ashamed to say so much on this subject, because it is one rather of feeling than argument; but you have reduced me to the humiliation of this confession, which I only make to show that in confidential friendship I have not declined towards you. . . . . Give my best respects to Mrs. Aston, and believe me, ever truly,

"Your faithful and obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, Bookseller, Manchester."

April 26. Mr. Holland took tea with Montgomery and Mr. Molineux of Macclesfield at the house of a mutual friend, Mr. Cowley, a Sheffield manufacturer. Mr. Molineux, an old writing-master, and the editor of several editions of "Byrom's Short-hand," felt a particular

interest in whatever related to stenography. *Molineux:* "I spent a few hours last week at Chester, with a Mr. Kitchingman, who is teaching a curious, but, as I think, a difficult scheme of short-hand, devised by himself; he exhibited a paper purporting to be Mr. Montgomery's testimony to the merits of his system: pray, sir, did you really write the document?" *Montgomery:* "He waited upon me, and wished me to notice his visit to Sheffield, and also to mention the merits of his writing, in the 'Iris.' Of course he explained and insisted upon its advantages; and as he appeared to be an ingenious and deserving young man, I felt unwilling to deny him any little benefit he could derive from my opinion in that way: but before saying anything I resolved to make myself master of his method. I did so; and thinking it at once an elegant and practicable short-hand, I wrote the paragraph you mention. I am, however, of opinion with you, that it is very arbitrary in its construction, and therefore requires, perhaps, as much from the memory as it apparently gives to the hand, in comparison with Byrom's." The merits of the two systems named, and several others, were discussed; Montgomery evincing, by his remarks, that he had paid considerable attention to the subject: indeed, he some years afterwards took the trouble of teaching his own "arbitrary" system to Mr. Hodgson's niece, Elizabeth Phillips, giving her also a lesson in the stanzas commencing, "These lines and dots are locks and keys."* Mr. Aston, of Manchester, was mentioned. *Montgomery:* "He was an early friend of mine, and many letters passed between us. This was at a time when I was neither burthened nor frightened by correspondence. I told him all that was in my heart; and a great deal

* Works, p. 347.

more than I ought to have told to any person in the world: these letters may some day rise up in judgment against me."* *Molineux:* "Did he ever give you, or show you, a little volume of his own verses made up from the newspaper?" *Montgomery:* "No; I suppose it was too precious. He reads poetry much better than he writes it: he even reads his own compositions well, which is what few poets can do, and perhaps still fewer ought to attempt to do. I had a lesson which helped to cure me of this folly when very young. On my first journey to London, utterly ignorant as I was of the world, and supposing that everybody must be as much interested with poetry as myself, when fairly seated in the coach I found myself *vis-à-vis* with a strange gentleman, who said something which encouraged me to pull out of my pocket the MS. of the 'Siege of the Cottage'†—you have seen it, Mr. Holland—and begin reading the story to him in my best manner. He soon ceased to evince his attention by audible expression, even when I thought my emphasis should have elicited it; but I still construed his silence into attention, till casually lifting my eyes from the paper, I saw he was—fast asleep! This was an admonition to my vanity by which I resolved to profit: but how frail is youthful resolution! When we reached Grantham another gentleman got into the coach, who, as I soon found, was in mind very superior to my first companion; and I began to think that my recent misadventure might, after all, be less

* After the death of Mr. Aston, these letters were returned to Montgomery, who might have destroyed them had he thought fit to do so; instead of which he gave them to the writer of this note. The use made of them in these Memoirs requires no other justification than the interesting and unobjectionable character of the letters themselves.

† Printed in the "Whisperer."

owing to want of merit in my composition than to lack of taste in my auditor. I therefore determined to repeat the experiment with my manuscript. I did so; and in this instance with decided success; for not only did the listener keep up his attention, and reiterate his expressions of approval, but he repeated to a clergyman whom we overtook on the road, in such lively terms, the interest he felt in my poem, that the latter paid our driver to allow his horse to run alongside the coach, while he came and sat inside to hear me read my story! He also declared himself much pleased. Here were not only, at least, two to one in my favour, but, as I naturally enough concluded, two men of taste against a man of none!"

In the course of the evening, Mr. Molineux read the following epitaph, written by his son-in-law the Rev. John Jackson, vicar of Over, Cheshire, on a Mrs. Shotwell, of Macclesfield:—

"Humbly with God she walked,—humane and just;
But Christ, her Saviour, was her only trust;
Go, musing stranger;—be thy life as pure,
Thy hope as steadfast, thy reward as sure!"

Montgomery expressed his approbation of these lines; describing, at the same time, the reluctance with which he engaged in such mortuary compositions, often as they were extorted from him; success, even when worth aiming at, being but rarely attainable. "I wrote," he continued, "one for the son and daughter of Mr. Holy, in consideration of which the good man promised to give two guineas annually to the Moravian Missionary Society,—a promise he has faithfully kept. I wrote another for Mr. Holt, of Wadsley Bridge, who sent me a couple of guineas for the same purpose: when I transmitted the money to Mr. Ramftler at Ful-

neck, I told him, much as I disliked this kind of work, I dare not refuse it, should I be again tempted with similar donations to the same object. I have an order to write an epitaph on a good woman at Bradwell*, which must be ready by next Tuesday; if Mr. Holland pleases, he shall write it." *Holland:* "I might surely venture to do it for an obscure burying-ground in the High Peak: did you ever visit Bradwell?" *Montgomery:* "Yes; on one occasion, many years ago, and I have good occasion to remember the visit. The entrance into the village amidst the rocks is by a very steep descent; when my horse reached a certain part of the road, he suddenly went down upon his knees, pitching me as suddenly over his head upon the stones. I was not, however, much hurt, and got up again as well as I could, unassisted by any one of half a dozen petrifactions of men who stood and witnessed the accident apparently with as little emotion as the limestone crags around us." *Holland:* "Then they offered neither assistance nor commiseration?" *Montgomery:* "Not they; such an occurrence appeared to be not strange to them; for I heard one of the fellows say, 'Aye, that's where everybody falls!'"

His representative in the management of the printing-office, and who had been anxious to become to be a partner, surprised him one day by a notification, not only that he had just got married, but that this step might

* The following are the lines alluded to:—

"The wicked cease from troubling here,
And here the weary are at rest:
Henceforth, till Christ their life appear,
The slumbers of the just are blest.
The saint who in this silent bed
Waits the last trumpet from the skies,
Shall then with joy lift up her head,
And like her risen Saviour rise."

affect the continuance of their present relation. The reply was as follows:—

James Montgomery to John Ray.

"'Iris' Office, July 21. 1823.

"DEAR SIR,

"You have my best wishes and prayers for all the happiness, and more than all, that you can anticipate in your new state. Miss H—— I have known long, and always very highly esteemed: assure her that I can have no interest in my present connection with you that shall militate, so far as depends upon myself, against your future joint welfare*, which I hope you will both of you be determined to consult in all the engagements and trials of life. Perhaps the sooner your marriage is publicly avowed the better.

"I am, very truly,

"Your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. John Ray."

Mr. Ray soon afterwards left the Iris office, and commenced business in Barnsley; Montgomery transferring the general management of his printing concern to a man of the name of Bridgeford, who had previously been employed upon the newspaper.

Sheffield was at one time quite remarkable for the belt of small gardens by which it was surrounded. They were mostly cultivated by the workmen, and afforded at once a rational, healthful, and profitable resource in hours which would otherwise have been spent idly or worse: but the expansion of the town has long since obliterated most of these pleasant plots; and in-

* So far from it, we have seen some long letters addressed to Mr. Ray four years afterwards by Montgomery, relative to his intervention in the settlement of a disputed legacy business, in which Mrs. Ray was beneficially interested.

dustrious individuals now labour at the anvil or in the furnace where their grandfathers once raised great gooseberries and rare auriculas. One of these little patches was tenanted by Montgomery — we could hardly say tended by him, for a less apt handler of spade or rake we never knew: but the garden produced flowers, and, as appears from the following playful epistle, fruit also: —

James Montgomery to Sarah Gales.

"Sheffield, Sept. 5. 1822.

"My dear Friend,

"I send you the largest apple that has grown in our garden—I wish it was as good as it is great; but there are persons of our sex who do not think *that* to be necessary with regard to themselves, though they would be the first to require it of an apple. I might, also, wish it was as good as it is handsome; but there are persons of your sex who would think *that* as little necessary as the former in reference to ladies, whatever it may be to apples,—and so I will wish nothing about the matter, except that as a token of remembrance from Sheffield it may be acceptable to you. I have been told that an apple never ripened in Buxton; be this as it may, such an one as this, I am pretty certain, never grew on any tree in that neighbourhood: as the product of *another country*, therefore, this specimen of what our garden can do, when it has a mind, will be welcome, even as a curiosity. But I have said ten times as much of it already as it is worth. We are doing as well as we can without you, and shall gladly continue to do so as long as you can enjoy yourself from home, and do without us.

"Meanwhile, believe me ever most sincerely and affectionately,

"Your friend,

"J. Montgomery.

"P. S. Present my best wishes and regards to Mrs. Daniels.

"Miss Sarah Gales, Buxton."

In the autumn of this year a grand musical festival was held in York Minster; and Montgomery's friends in that city, anxious that he should enjoy the promised treat, invited him to attend,—Miss Rountree and her brother, his Quaker correspondents, especially pressing him to make their house his home on the occasion. But duty pointed in another and a sadder direction. "I take your offer," he writes to them, "very kindly, and should have been very happy to avail myself of your hospitality, had I been at liberty to visit York during the musical festival. But duty calls me another way: I must go to the House of Suffering, though I cannot call it the House of Mourning, because there is joy and hope in tribulation there." He accordingly went and spent some weeks at Hinckley, in Leicestershire, where his brother Ignatius was residing for the convenience of submitting to the treatment of the celebrated Mr. Chesher, for a disease of the spine which finally wore down his body to the dust. The two volumes of "Prose by a Poet" were here prepared for the press; and some idea of the author's state of mind may be inferred from the tone in which he has commemorated "A Lucid Interval" in the general gloom of this melancholy visit, during a period of suffering solicitude for the amendment of his poor invalid brother's health. Indeed, so nervous was he, that having given his packet of manuscript to the guard of the mail with a strict injunction that he would deliver it to one of the Messrs. Longmans with his own hands, Montgomery afterwards walked a mile or two on the London road to be quite sure the precious consignment had not been dropped at the outset of the journey!

Nov. 17. This day Robert Southey, being on a sort of incognito visit at Doncaster*, came on to Shef-

* The attributed birthplace and residence of "Daniel Dove,"

field, accompanied by his daughter (afterwards Mrs. Warter), where he invited Montgomery to spend the evening with him at the Tontine Inn. Ebenezer Elliott, the "Corn Law Rhymer," who was previously known to him by letter, also had an interview. Mr. Everett, his old antagonist in Methodistic controversy, likewise called upon the Laureate, and spent a pleasant hour with him. Montgomery left early, having to read a short paper before the Literary and Philosophical Society, introductory to a discussion of the following question,—"Is it possible for one science to attain to a degree of perfection whilst others are disproportionately depressed?" With his wonted modesty, he said nothing of the nature of the engagement which had compelled him thus early, and as we know reluctantly, to leave Southey, who, on reading a notice of the discussion in the newspaper, the following morning, said he should have liked to have been present. The requisition that Montgomery would read an essay on this theme originated from a hint thrown out by him at a previous meeting, relative to the high degree of perfection attained by the architects of Europe during what are termed "the dark ages," when literature and the sciences in general were almost entirely neglected.

Few persons were so well acquainted with the religious exercises of Montgomery's mind as the Rev. C. F. Ramftler, his pastor,—if, indeed, that term can apply with any propriety to the relation of parties who rarely met, except in their written correspondence. Still, as we have said before, the worthy Fulneck minister was a sound as well as a sympathising Christian counsellor as

the hero of "The Doctor, &c." When that strange book first made its appearance, there were several things in it connected with Southey's visit to Doncaster which pointed him out as the author of it.

far as opportunity served; and the comparative infrequency, and so far imperfect action, of his spiritual services towards so distant a member of his flock, was no fault on his part. Nor can it be surprising if, between his own reasonable hopes founded on what he knew of the past history and character of the poet, and the often expressed desire of the latter to escape from the trammels of business, the possibility of a closer union with the Brethren should sometimes have been contemplated. The following passage of a letter from Mr. Ramftler, dated Nov. 10. 1823, will show that such hopes sometimes found appropriate expression: — "Your excellent brother's long protracted affliction calls for much sympathy, and in him the power of divine grace is sweetly manifested .... On your expression of personal feelings I should value conversation with you at an early opportunity. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might! What his Word, Spirit, and Providence direct you will do, and thus have peace. Do you feel impelled to any ministerial employment at your time of life? And have you yet written any memoir of your life, as you once intimated to me?" He had no vocation for the pulpit; and never wrote a line of autobiography beyond the preface to his collected poems.

Dec. 12. Montgomery delivered a Lecture on "Modern English Literature" before the members of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society: it is comprised in the series afterwards published.

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, Dec. 23. 1823.

"My dear Friend,

"As we hope that you will soon be on your way home, taking a compass round the eastern world, we must

provide relays of letters to meet you at those points where it is probable you will touch. Such a correspondence is very precarious, and one cannot engage in it with earnestness; but as every memento of existing friendship in the land which you have left behind, and to which your heart is returning,—like a comet, burning brighter as well as warmer, and seeming to accelerate its course thither,—will be unceasingly welcome, because after such an absence you are sure to find us fewer, and older, and less likely to last than we were,—I will let fly this sheet in the hope that winds and waves will waft it safe to your hand, and make your pulse beat quicker with old affections for a few moments, while you open and peruse its brief contents. One female friend, whom you once esteemed, and whom you will sincerely lament, has lately been removed from us—Miss Mary Bailey. In September last, after several months of severe suffering, her naturally feeble constitution, being probably broken down a little earlier than otherwise it might have been by long, painful, and too intensely sympathising care in watching and nursing her afflicted sister, whose life has seemed to hang upon a film of gossamer, and that film committed to poor Mary's keeping,—she went first, and we have a good hope that her end was peace, and her present portion everlasting blessedness. Miss Bailey wonderfully survives; and, in truth, for a long time she and Mary had changed places in the sick room. Their parents are both exceedingly infirm: good old Mr. Bailey appeared to be dropping into the grave that closed on Mary, but within a few weeks he has looked *up*, and I trust is looking *forward* again. Our inestimable friend Mr. Rowland Hodgson has had another sharp visitation of his inveterate complaint, which has obliged him to retire to the south of England for the winter. He has, indeed, been rendered back to us from the gate of death so frequently, that we may yet pray with confident expectation that goodness and mercy may yet follow him through many years of a life so precious to his friends, to the Church, and to the world in our quarter, as his has hitherto been. Mr. Roberts holds on

pretty stoutly, and in his peculiar way continues to do good, —and a great deal, too, in one respect; for, principally by his exertions, we have raised about 320*l.* in a few weeks for the Moravian Missions. The Rev. T. Cotterill, who has approved himself an able, faithful, and successful minister of Jesus Christ, for three weeks past has been in imminent peril by reason of a very dreadful fever. Over and over again have physicians and friends given him up; but within the last day or two favourable symptoms have appeared, and the fears of hundreds—I might say thousands (he is so beloved)—are changed into hopes; and I trust the mourning of his connections will be turned into joy soon at his recovery. Your excellent and honoured pastor, the Rev. J. Boden, has been tried in the fire also, and at the same time with Mr. Cotterill: but he is much better now. On looking back, what a letter is this! You see we are dying on every side: return speedily,—but only with God's speed and in his time,—or you will have to look for us in 'the house appointed for all living.' Well, and if that be the only meeting we shall have here, there is another 'house not built with hands, eternal in the heavens;' whither Jesus, our forerunner, is gone to prepare mansions for *those* who love his disciples in deed, and not in name and profession only. May you and I be of this number! and then what shall we have to fear, except those enemies of our souls—the world, the flesh, and the devil, from whom, though we cannot be wholly delivered here, yet over them we may be more than conquerors through Him that loved us! Farewell, and the Lord be with you ever.

"Your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P. S. Dec. 25. I forward this on the evening of Christmas day, with the cordial Christian regards of all your old friends, the teachers and superintendents of Queen Street Sunday Schools.

"George Bennet, Esq., of Sheffield, at New South Wales."

CHAP. LV.

1824.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF THE REV. THOMAS COTTERILL. — SUBSCRIPTION FOR HIS WIDOW AND FAMILY. — MONTGOMERY'S ACTIVITY IN THE AFFAIR. — LETTER TO HANNAH MORE. — PUBLICATION OF "PROSE BY A POET." — MISS AIKIN. — "OLD WOMEN." — CONVERSATION. — CHIMNEY-SWEEPERS. — JOHN WESLEY AND BISHOP FOSTER. — ALLEGED INCREASE OF CRIME. — MURDER OF WEARE. — MAGNANIMITY AT THE GALLOWS. — "CLIMBING BOYS' ALBUM." — CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORK. — CORRESPONDENCE AND OPINIONS.

On the 2nd of January Montgomery attended the annual meeting of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, and read a report of the proceedings of the past year. As this document was also written by the poet, it contained not the slightest allusion to his own services to the Institution: these, however, were gratefully acknowledged on his being proposed for president, to which office he was unanimously elected; Mr. Everett, who had read one of the monthly essays, being on the council. As we were not present on this occasion, the first time we saw Montgomery this year was among the many mourners at the funeral of his friend, the Rev. Thomas Cotterill, who, on the 6th of January*, was

* Mr. Cotterill died on New Year's day, while the poet was attending a Tract Meeting, and where a message was brought to him announcing the event. He immediately wrote the following, handed it to the chairman, and retired: — "Since I came into the chapel I have received a summons to a house of mourning, where

interred near the communion table in the church where he had laboured as an able and faithful minister of the gospel for seven years: the only drawback on the entire affection which had otherwise subsisted between the pastor and his flock, having been the dispute about the introduction of a Hymn Book, as already mentioned; but even in this but few of his seat-holders took an active part; and assuredly no clergyman had ever been carried to his grave in the town of Sheffield, more sincerely lamented by the religious portion of the community, among all denominations, than the deceased, who had borne the reproach, as he had merited the appellation, of an evangelical preacher. "He was," said Montgomery, on hearing of his death, "one to whom the tenderest relationships of life exemplified all that was lovely, pure, and of good report; he has left many friends to whom he is endeared by the most estimable and companionable qualities; he has left a congregation, among whom he was the faithful, vigilant, and affectionate pastor. He will be bitterly missed wherever we were wont to hail him with delight as the eloquent, active, self-sacrificing advocate of Christian Institutions. But he lived not for his family, his friends, and his flock alone: his fervent spirit, his consecrated talent, his cheerful piety will continue, in his 'Family Prayers' and his admirable 'Hymn Book,' to quicken, aid, and elevate the devotion of thousands in the present generation. He is gone to prove for himself all that he believed and taught from Revelation, concerning the eternal realities of a happier world. His end was peace; and blessed be his memory."

death has been, and where death *is*. I must go. I came hither because I would not miss a meeting of this kind, if I could attend, after having been at every successive anniversary for eleven years. I cannot, however, remain longer; which I regret."

Out of place no one will surely deem in these pages this memento of a man with whom Montgomery so often took "sweet counsel," and on whose death he composed, as we have said, the elegiac verses beginning—

"Friend after friend departs," &c.

Mr. Cotterill left a widow and five children unprovided for, with the exception of what might arise from the current sale of his works. It was therefore determined to set on foot a subscription in behalf of Mrs. Cotterill, the administration of which was vested in three trustees, namely, Dr. (afterwards, the venerable Archdeacon) Corbet, John Newbould, Esq., and Montgomery. Ultimately the widow, by deed, transferred all the interest in her deceased husband's copyrights to the fund thus created, in the management of which, especially the literary sources, Montgomery took an active part, till the property, at Mrs. Cotterill's death, was divided among her children—the latter maintaining a grateful and affectionate regard for the devoted friend of their parents and of themselves, as long as he lived. This subscription for the Sheffield clergyman's widow was successful, perhaps, beyond precedent in such a case. The interest Montgomery took in it will be illustrated by the following letter addressed by him to Hannah More:—

James Montgomery to Mrs. Hannah More.

"Sheffield, 1824.

"DEAR MADAM,

"Your letter, containing eleven pounds,—from Mr. S. 5*l.*, Mrs. W. 5*l.*, and Mr. P. 1*l.*,—came to hand this morning; and I have paid the amount to the treasurer of the fund for the use of Mrs. C. and her children. Accept

for them the expression of my sincere thanks. You have done well, and you have influenced others to do likewise, beyond what yourself may be aware of. I ventured to publish an extract from your former letter in the 'Iris;' and although I cannot specifically state the effect, I am as confident that there was a blessing on it, as if I could enumerate all the good feelings, good purposes, and good works it produced among benevolent and Christian readers. Though it was a bold liberty to take with the very first communication that I ever received at your hands, there was no time to ask permission, and I chose rather to hazard the responsibility of giving it seasonable publicity, than the responsibility of withholding it a day longer than I could help. I considered, and I considered rightly, that some persons have that to give which is more valuable than gold or silver; and as you are of this privileged number, I could not in my conscience deny to the widow and the fatherless the authority and influence of your name and your example, not only in contributing liberally to their relief, but in sanctioning and recommending those excellent forms of prayer which the departed servant of the Lord has left, not merely as a legacy which may produce a small pecuniary advantage to his family, but as an inheritance to the Church itself, to be enjoyed by all its members — and here I mean the Church of Christ generally—who are inclined to avail themselves of such a spiritual provision of 'daily bread' for their families. Forgive what may seem praise in this statement in reference to yourself; but I could not explain the motive for that which I had done without your leave, and avoid saying that which, however agreeable to myself to avow, you may feel humbled, and yet, I trust, gratified to hear, because there is truth and honesty in the fact, and in the feeling with which I write it. The subscription for this family has indeed gone on gloriously: I believe it amounts to about 4000*l.** And surely this is a token for good, that God is indeed blessing the faithful testimony of the gospel of his

* It ultimately reached almost to 5000*l.*

Son, by whomsoever preached, when so many people of all classes, from the archbishop and the peer down to very humble individuals, are made willing to contribute so freely to the comfort of those who are rendered dear to the living because they belonged to one who had laboured in the Lord, and was 'esteemed very highly for his work's sake;' and who having died in the Lord also, his works not only followed him to the judgment seat, but are thus made to follow him in blessings to those who give and those who receive this unexampled bounty. I cannot imagine the possibility of such a sum of money being poured in from all quarters, all ranks, all kinds (if I may use the word) of people, for the family of any minister of another character than the late Mr. C.; as much might be raised, perhaps, in many instances, but then it would be among rich and powerful connections, and within a certain locality or sphere of personal influence. His townspeople (not of his church) have generously made one cause with those more directly attached to him; but a very large proportion of the sums contributed has come from distant parts of the kingdom—from strangers, who knew him only by his writings and his character, or who had occasionally witnessed his zeal, and faith, and fervour on Missionary and Bible Society occasions.

"I am crowding my paper, and setting you a difficult task to read my scrawl; but my hand has run faster and longer than I thought it would do when I took up the pen, being exceedingly unwell, though, like the breathing of a vein in some complaints, I feel better for the exercise, which is more than I have had courage to take in the same way for several days. Mrs. C. was exceedingly grateful for your former kindnesses, and this additional proof of your remembrance will cheer her heart. She droops much; but who would not, circumstanced as she is? He was no ordinary man.

"Accept my best thanks for your too good opinion of me; would that I merited it!

"I am, very truly and respectfully,

"Your obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

Contemporaneously with the mournful engagements above mentioned, and but little in accordance with Montgomery's saddened feelings at the time, appeared "Prose by a Poet;"—anonymously, indeed, but presenting too many salient points of identification with his known writings, to leave the authorship of those two pleasant volumes long in doubt. It was not probable that, under any circumstances, a work by Montgomery could fail to be presently recognised in the place of his residence; for not only was his prose style better known in Sheffield than elsewhere, from the lucubrations in the "Iris," and several other things, but likewise from the fact that some of the most interesting portions of what now appeared before the public had been reconstructed out of the best-written of his newspaper articles; and which himself, as well as some of his friends, thought too good to be buried under the mass of miscellaneous matter with which they had been originally published. To the certainty of his detection by his friends from these circumstances he refers in the introductory dialogue between "The Readers and the Book," where he says, p. xi., "I am not aware that one of them, when I am announced, will suspect whence I come, till among my contents are discovered some of their old acquaintance." The fact that a request had been made to the poet by his publishers to supply them with as much matter in prose as would make two volumes, had been mentioned to Mr. Everett by Mr. Orme himself; but while we were otherwise aware that our friend was engaged upon some work of this kind, he maintained an entire silence on the subject—for which we could fully account, when the book was announced without a name. When Mr. Everett showed him an advertisement which comprised the

titles of some of the articles, he smiled, and said, "I was sure you would detect me; but say nothing; let the public guess." In a few days two copies of the work were received, each inscribed with a name, and "From an old Friend," accompanied by the following note:—

"Jan. 5. 1824.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I send a copy of 'Prose by a Poet' for yourself, and beg your acceptance of it. Pray let Mr. John Holland have the enclosed parcel at the first opportunity; it is a copy for him.

"I am, truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Rev. James Everett."

The author addressed a copy to Miss Aikin, as "From an old Friend," which was acknowledged in the following terms:—

Miss Lucy Aikin to James Montgomery.

"Stoke Newington, Jan. 6. 1824.

"I cannot believe that my old friend wishes to preserve a very strict incognito, when every sentence of his *prose* is too strongly marked with the stamp of the poet I have so often read and admired to be mistaken for an instant. You will then permit me to return you my cordial thanks for volumes dear to me as a pledge of your kind remembrance, no less than for their own merits. Many of the pieces appear to me very original both in matter and manner, and interesting and beautiful in a high degree; some others are less grateful to my taste, because the sentiments are not accordant with my own; but the sincerity of the writer, and his good intentions, I can everywhere most sincerely respect. Our house seems a desolate place since it lost its master; to revisit it would be to you, I fear, a pain, and not a pleasure; but I can most sincerely assure you, on the part of my dear

mother as well as myself, that it would always be to us a high gratification to see you enter it.

"Believe me, with sincere regard,

"Yours ever,

"LUCY AIKIN.

"J. Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

Mr. Everett expressed surprise at the omission of some essays, especially that on the "Imperishability of Words," already noticed.* *Montgomery:* "Should I live a century longer, I may perhaps revise and reprint some of them. The one you name is identified in my mind with an interesting circumstance: when I read it in public, a young lady who heard it was so clearly convinced of the baseness of her conduct, in having defamed the character of a minister of the gospel by gross insinuations conveyed in anonymous letters, that she not only felt deep compunction for having been guilty of so vile a practice, but went home and wrote a letter in her real name expressive of her penitence and horror!" *Everett:* "So much for the force of truth and conscience: the essay might perhaps be useful to others who have uttered words wantonly, foolishly, or insidiously." *Montgomery:* "I am told by a friend, that Wordsworth is displeased at what I have said of him in 'Pen, Ink, and Paper.'"† *Everett:* "It is difficult to

* A considerable portion of this Essay, altered to suit the subject, was afterwards used in the beginning of his "Retrospect of Literature."

† In the "Gentleman's Magazine" for October, 1772, there is a Fable entitled "Pen, Ink, and Paper." The drift of the story is a contest of the three for superiority; which thus ends:—

"From hence let Britons draw
This plain and useful moral,—
Britain shall Europe awe
While Britons never quarrel."

conceive how the description of him as securing 'a nest of young nightingales' from the clutches of a gang of rascally schoolboys, can be regarded as otherwise than complimentary." *Montgomery*: "I certainly had no intention to the contrary. The allusion might have been deemed equivocal had I retained the illustration as first written, in which I had introduced him with a handkerchief full of what are vulgarly called *toadstools* —those loathsome but often beautifully tinted and studded things of which poor Henry Steinhaur was so fond, but which to me are vegetable toads and frogs."* For a time the work sold well. "Everybody," said Mr. Orme in a note, "is reading 'Prose by a Poet;' and everybody knows the author,—except his friends in the Row." One of the most gratifying testimonies of an interest in these volumes, was the fact of the formation of a society for relieving aged females, in connection with the reading of the paper on "Old Women" by a clergyman at Malvern. A lady, writing to inform Montgomery how earnestly her colleagues had engaged in this good work, said, "You may perhaps feel some interest about one of them, from the circumstance of her being the widow of (*the ghost*) Lord Lyttelton; she did not sink under the trial she was obliged to undergo in her early separation from him: her religion supported her through her severe affliction, and the *good* Lord Lyttelton failed not to show every mark of attention and kindness to one whom his son would not love; but who inspired all besides who knew her, with sentiments of admiration for her fine talents, and esteem for her many excellent qualities. At the age of eighty-one, she is still indefatigable in her attention to the Sunday and other schools which she

* "A Forenoon at Harrogate," Prose by a Poet, vol. ii. p. 224.

has established." Montgomery himself remarked to us that "Prose by a Poet" would probably fail to please either of two large classes of readers, namely, persons of taste merely, who would be disgusted with the introduction of religious sentiments; and individuals of a decidedly religious character, who would consider much of the matter too light or sentimental. Nor was he mistaken. The tone of the essays was, on the whole, pitched in a too gentle key to be very attractive to the admirers of that brilliant and exciting style of writing which was coming into vogue, especially in periodicals: hence, their success was too moderate to encourage a repetition of the experiment.

Jan. 25. Mr. Holland dined with Montgomery at Mr. Longden's. *Montgomery:* "Mr. Holland, I have not yet done with the 'Investigator;'* I borrowed it for the sake of an article on the agriculture of the Israelites, written by Mr. Plumptre†, who has sent me several volumes of his poetical works for the library of our Literary and Philosophical Society, in consequence, he says, of reading my speech in a previous number of this periodical. His essay is interesting; but it ought to have been written in a more lively style." Mr. Longden alluded to a rumour then

* A short-lived quarterly periodical.

† The Rev. James Plumptre, vicar of Great Gransden, Huntingdonshire, a zealous advocate of the notion of so "purifying the Drama" that theatrical exhibitions might be rendered edifying to Christian audiences! His own exemplifications of this attempt on the works of several popular English "playwrights" are the volumes referred to in the text. He sometimes rather perplexed Montgomery by his letters on this subject, especially when he assumed the poet's concurrence in his views, and that he must be taking an active part in the controversy then going on in Sheffield between the pulpit and the stage; on both which points he was mistaken.

in circulation, to the effect that a London publisher had stipulated with "the author of 'Waverley'" for two novels a year, at a startling price. *Montgomery:* "I have heard the rumour, but I do not believe that any bookseller would enter into such a bargain; as he would have to encounter a double risk in the chance of the falling off in interest on the part of the public, and of execution on the part of the writer; though I have no doubt that the latter would be able to furnish his quota of volumes with as much regularity and almost as little difficulty as Allan Cunningham supplies a tale per month to the 'London Magazine.'"* *Longden:* "I have a letter from Mrs. Hofland, in which she desires me to present her kind regards to Mr. Montgomery." *Montgomery:* "But does she promise to do anything for the sweeps? Mr. Holland will be surprised when I tell him that I have received promises from *three* Sheffield poetesses—two of whom, I believe, you do not know." *Longden:* "I presume Miss R. is one of them?" *Montgomery:* Miss Roberts *is* one of them. I sent her a circular, and wrote upon it, 'You must give us the 'Lay of the Last Chimney-Sweeper.' It instantly struck me that this would really be a good subject; and as I must do something, I had half a mind to tear the letter and appropriate the theme: but I said, 'No; that would be cowardly and ungenerous; I intended the hint for Mary, and she shall have it.'" *Longden:* "Has she done anything?" *Montgomery:* "She has sketched a story, which, when filled up, will do her credit." *Holland:* "Have you received any very recent communications on this subject?" *Montgomery*: "Yesterday I had a letter from Bowles,

* He rightly estimated the powers of the author; but much underrated the wonderful reaction of demand and supply which he lived to witness.

who promises to do something: he had seen Moore, who says he will write the 'Climbing Girl!' I wish he would do so. Bowles adds, that his neighbour, Lord Lansdowne, has promised to support us in the House of Lords against the sarcasms of Lord Lauderdale, which our cause has had to encounter." *Holland:* "Pray, sir, upon what authority is the assertion made in the circular, that *girls* are employed to sweep chimneys?" *Montgomery:* "If you *doubt* as to the fact, you don't deserve to know anything about it: but if you *believe* it, I will give you confirmatory evidence. At our Climbing Boys' dinner last Easter Monday, a girl was actually introduced, by her parents, *as a sweep,* to dine with the boys! On being questioned relative to their barbarous conduct, they coolly replied, in effect, that having no boy of their own, and being too poor to hire one, they employed their own daughter as a sweep! She appeared a modest girl, and about the size and age of this"—laying his hand on the shoulder of one of his host's children about ten years old. "The ladies took considerable interest in the case; and, on inquiry, they found that there was at least another girl in the town occupied in this disgusting and degrading manner." *

Some remarks were made to the effect that the subject was almost as little suited to poetry, as girls to chimney-sweeping. *Montgomery:* "I am quite aware of that—nor can it be rendered either pleasing or popular: but, however ungrateful the duty laid upon me, I felt that, under the circumstances, I could not

* In the "Edinburgh Review," No. LXIV., there is an article (written by the late Rev. Sydney Smith) embodying ample quotations from the Parliamentary Report on the Condition of Climbing Boys: it contains evidence of the employment of *girls* by the sweeper of the chimneys at Windsor Castle.

shrink from it without missing what appeared to be a providential chance of doing good. I have already received several, and expect to receive further, communications: these it is intended to print in what Mr. Holland calls the 'Chimney-Sweeper's Album,' and which may eventually be the title of the volume." Some one remarked, "that as it was an affair of pure charity, the arts of design as well as of music might render some small tribute." *Montgomery:* "Well, we must try Cruikshank for a sketch*; and if Moore will give us the 'Chimney-Sweeper's Girl,' we need not hesitate to ask Sir John Stephenson for music to it."†

* Cruikshank did furnish two or three appropriate designs.

† Although no poetical contribution was received from Mr. Moore for the book, the following letter will show how cordially he responded to the application of his brother poet:—

"Sloperton Cottage, Devizes, April 17. 1824.

"DEAR SIR,

"I have a thousand apologies to make for the long delay that has taken place in my answer to your letter. I had, immediately upon receiving it, tried my hand at a few stanzas for your purpose, and had even uttered as an invocation,—

"O for a Muse of *smoke*, that would ascend
The highest *chimney* of invention!—

but nothing came that I could venture to send you; and though I ought to have written to tell you so, yet—I *did* not, and must only trust to your good nature for forgiveness.

"It would give me great delight to meet you. There are passages of yours that I repeat to myself almost daily; among which are,—

"'The dead are like the stars by day,' &c.*

"If ever good luck should take me through Sheffield, I shall, on the strength of our chimney-sweep correspondence, knock at your door.

"Yours very truly,

"THOMAS MOORE.

"To J. Montgomery, Esq. Sheffield."

* Incognita.

After dinner the conversation turned on the Rev. John Wesley, with whom an elderly individual present had been well acquainted. Montgomery manifested deep interest in what was said about the founder of Methodism; remarking that he had been most of all surprised at the vast extent of the journeys which he undertook, and the concurrent labour of preaching. He added that he never saw the good man, who nevertheless must have visited Fulneck while he was at school there. *Holland:* "Mr. Wesley was fond of meeting the children who used to gather about him in the street; and it is remarkable how many of those upon whom he then pronounced a blessing, afterwards became members of his societies." This led a lady to mention that she once travelled by the mail to Leeds with a venerable old gentleman, who told her his name was Foster; she was much pleased with his edifying religious conversation; and when they got out of the coach, he pulled off his glove, laid his hand upon her head, and pronounced a solemn benediction; adding, that although they might never again meet on earth, he hoped they would meet in heaven. *Montgomery:* "Ah! he was one of our Moravian bishops. I owe much to the wise instructions and pious example of that good man. Formerly—of course long before his elevation to the episcopal office, a very unostentatious dignity in the Moravian Church—he was teacher in the seminary at Fulneck, where he was exceedingly fond of the boys, and they of him; but being a very absent man, they often amused themselves with his mistakes. I used to steal into his library, and get a sight of such books as were not allowed to be read in the school. We considered Brother Foster's marriage not merely as 'an event,' but as a thing quite marvellous; for the probability of such an occurrence in his

case had not entered into our boyish heads. I recollect he left his wife, to spend an hour with us in the school-room, on the afternoon of his wedding-day."

A gentleman in the room inquired, "Mr. Montgomery, how do you account for the increase of crime, notwithstanding the progress of refinement, and the great number of religious seminaries and other educational institutions?" *Montgomery:* "I deny the premises on which your question is founded. I believe crime—using the term in its worst sense—does *not* increase in the ratio of our advancing population. How seldom, now-a-days, do we hear of such atrocious murders or such daring robberies as we read about in the 'Newgate Calendar,' when footpads went forth with 'crape and cocked pistol!' Thieving, indeed, and manslaughter are lamentably frequent; but still, the notion that crimes are *increasing* beyond precedent arises mainly from the fact that they are sooner, better, and more extensively known than they were formerly; for, by the circulation of newspapers, and by other rapid means of information, there is hardly any serious offence against the laws committed in the most obscure corner of a remote county, but it is circumstantially—not to say attractively—set forth in print, and heard of by almost every individual in the kingdom. Only take a recent instance,—the murder of Mr. Weare, and the report of the trial of the parties implicated which took place at Hertford the other day, of which a single newspaper [the 'Observer'] issued at least 200,000 copies of one edition." *Longden:* "I was glad you took an opportunity of reprehending in the 'Iris' the popular sympathy which has been so strongly interested in that atrocious affair: it was one of the most important articles which you have latterly published."* *Montgomery:*

* Iris, Jan. 20. 1824. It was really a seasonable and well-written article.

"The public mind has indeed been dreadfully misled, not only with regard to the peculiarity of the tragedy itself, but in relation to the chief actors in it; and I was determined to do what I could towards correcting the impression, at least within the circle of my own readers." *Gentleman:* "I suppose, sir, you have no doubt but that Weare himself was a bad man?" *Montgomery:* "He used, it seems, to travel the country with an E. O. table, and was well known at Doncaster and other races as a downright fleecing gambler." *Gentleman:* "Do you think Hunt [an accessory in the murder] will make any important disclosures?" *Montgomery:* "I should think not. He does not seem to have been much trusted by the rest; but to have been a sort of subordinate whom the principals might use in any foul deed—an under-villain, who, like the second murderer in a tragedy, just comes upon the stage to give the victim a stab, and off again." *Holland:* "You have characterised Thurtell's conduct at the place of execution by the term 'magnanimity,' which I think it must be allowed is applicable." *Montgomery:* "It was the magnanimity of an actor performing a great part—a tremendous reality, indeed; but perhaps less difficult, under the circumstances, than is sometimes imagined. The consciousness that thousands, or rather tens of thousands, of spectators are watching the conduct, and many of them approving, if not actually applauding the firmness of the hero is, as experience proves, a source of excitement sufficient to enable even the worst malefactor to brave out the last desperate exhibition, and, as the phrase is, *die game!* I have myself been in situations which enabled me, in some degree, to judge of the effect of an approving multitude on personal courage*; and although I am naturally one

* His trials at York, in 1794—5, for libels.

of the greatest cowards in this world, I am persuaded that I should not shrink under desperate circumstances; but should act the hero as magnanimously as any one — if I was going to be hanged."

We have adverted to the interest which Montgomery took in efforts to ameliorate the condition of the poor children employed in sweeping chimneys. His principal coadjutor in this enterprise, Mr. Roberts, being anxious to enlist the sympathies of literature in aid of these outcasts, induced his friend to address a circular letter to upwards of twenty of the favourite poets of the day, soliciting a contribution from each. In most instances the printed address was accompanied by a personal note from the applicant; and from all the parties courteous replies were received.

Public attention was first particularly excited towards the condition of climbing-boys in the year 1788, when the well-known Jonas Hanway, with some other benevolent gentlemen, prepared a bill to be brought into parliament for the purpose of protecting these boys in the prosecution of their trade. The bill contained, in its original form, a variety of provisions * for that purpose; but the principal ones, such as licensing all master sweeps; requiring them to keep a register of the names and ages of their apprentices; and preventing what was termed "calling the streets" by the latter, were rejected by the House of Lords; the act, however, of 28 Geo. III. c. 48. was passed. In the year 1800 the Society for bettering the Condition of the Poor in the Metropolis took up the subject; but little or nothing appears to have been done upon that occasion, except that the more respectable master

* Evidence of Mr. Tooke before a Committee of the House of Commons, 1817.

chimney-sweepers entered into an association and subscription amongst themselves for promoting the cleanliness and health of the boys in their respective services.

The honour of having been the means of calling public attention to this subject in the most efficient manner, and especially of being perhaps the very first to suggest the idea of substituting inanimate machinery for little children in the loathsome employment of cleansing chimneys, is due to a lady. In the "St. James's Chronicle" of 1802 appeared an earnest letter written by Mrs. Bates *, under the signature of "A Friend to Progress in Social Life." Amidst various appropriate remarks, she says:—"The two public patrons of these poor wretches, Mr. Jonas Hanway and Mrs. Montague †, are removed by death; but if a few generous persons would unite, and propose a premium for the best constructed machine to do the work [of climbing-boys], I doubt not it would speedily be accomplished." In consequence of this letter, a large meeting was held at the London Coffee House in February 1803, when the "Society for superseding the Necessity of Climbing-Boys, by encouraging a New Method of Sweeping Chimneys, and for improving the Condition of Children and others employed by Chimney-Sweepers," was instituted. Nothing, however, was effected beyond such ameliorations of the system as were compelled by repeated exposure of its

* This lady was the relict of the well-known Eli Bates, who left at her free disposal an ample fortune. She afterwards became a member of the Moravian congregation, though not of the church, and was during her lifetime a munificent benefactor in aid of the religious exertions of the Brethren. Montgomery was solicited to write a Memoir of her; but to this he felt disinclined, on account of some peculiar religious notions entertained by her, which he either did not fully comprehend or did not care to discuss.

† The May-day holiday of the London sweeps is inseparably identified with the name of this benevolent lady.

evils, though a bill had been brought into parliament in 1816, but withdrawn on technical grounds. It was now thought that the time had arrived for a fresh effort to enlist the co-operation of the legislature; to such benevolent design this publication was to be preliminary. In order to ensure its success, Montgomery not only applied for aid from his literary friends, but he addressed the following letter to a gentleman who had immediate personal access to the King: —

James Montgomery to Sir William Knighton.

"Sheffield, Jan. 31. 1824.

"SIR,

"I am instructed by a small company of persons, who have been long associated for the purpose of bettering the condition of Chimney-Sweepers' Climbing-Boys in this town, to entreat you to recommend our intended work in their favour, to the most gracious consideration of his Majesty, who, formerly in his high office of Prince Regent, and latterly as Sovereign, has condescended to be the patron of a Society in the metropolis established for the same humane and patriotic purpose—the mitigation of sufferings the most severe and unmerited, necessarily inflicted on the most helpless and unoffending of our fellow-subjects to qualify them for a barbarous and abominable occupation, unfit to be performed by human beings of any age, and least of all by children.

"The enclosed circular, which has been addressed to the principal poets of the day,—from several of whom contributions or promises of assistance have been already received, —will explain the character of the Work, which, besides the poetical pieces, will contain much authentic and affecting information on the subject of this grievous evil in our country, calculated to awaken the public mind (if we can get fair access to it) to a due sense of the duty of abolishing altogether a practice so flagitious.

"The immediate object of this letter is to engage you, as

the proper person, most earnestly and dutifully to solicit his Majesty to be pleased to permit us to dedicate the little volume to himself, as Patron of the Institution already mentioned. As the beneficent and equal father of his numerous British-born family, we will humbly hope that the King will accede to our request, which is not preferred for the purpose of gaining either honour or profit for ourselves, but most conscientiously and disinterestedly to serve the poorest and most disgraced of his Majesty's subjects.

"Trusting that in the exercise of your discretion you will be kindly disposed to render us this service, at the earliest convenient season, and in the most effectual manner,

"I am, Sir, very respectfully,

"Your most obedient and humble servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

Upwards of a month having elapsed without any answer having been received to the foregoing letter, the subject was re-urged on the attention of Sir William Knighton by the Treasurer of the Metropolitan Society, and to whom the following answer was presently returned:—

Charles R. Sumner to W. Tooke, Esq. M. P.

"Carlton Palace, March 5. 1824.

"SIR,

"I have had the honour of receiving the King's commands to inform you that his Majesty has been pleased to comply with the request of Mr. James Montgomery communicated through you.

"You will therefore be pleased to acquaint that gentleman that he is authorised to dedicate to his Majesty his intended publication on the subject of the sufferings of boys employed in cleansing chimneys by climbing.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient and faithful servant,

"CHARLES R. SUMNER,

"Librarian."

Accordingly the volume, which appeared in the spring of this year under the title of the "Chimney-Sweepers' Friend, and Climbing-Boys' Album," and "arranged by James Montgomery," was "Dedicated to the Father of all his People, King George the Fourth," to whom, of course, a copy was transmitted.

Charles R. Sumner to James Montgomery.

"Carlton.

"SIR,

"I have to acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the 'Climbing-Boys' Album,' the greater part of which I have perused, and with much interest,—and beg leave to express my earnest wishes that the benevolent endeavours of the Society at whose instance it has been published, may eventually be crowned with success. As soon as the copy which you mention is in preparation for the King shall be transmitted to Carlton House, I will take care to place it without delay in the hands of his Majesty, whom all must rejoice to see so steady a patron of the Society.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your obedient and faithful servant,

"CHARLES R. SUMNER,

"Librarian.

"James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

The work is divided into two parts; the first comprising miscellaneous tracts and documents (principally republications), presenting the uncoloured and unexaggerated realities of the case in the various forms of argument, authentic narrative, and parliamentary evidence. By these, of course, the friends of the chimney-sweeper expected the issue of this literary appeal mainly to be determined. The second portion consisted, with one or two exceptions, of pieces in prose or verse written for the occasion. "To enrich this department," says

the editor, "copies of the circular letter* were addressed [in many instances, as we have said, backed by a more particular personal appeal] to upwards of twenty of the favourite poets of the day. From most of these very gratifying answers were received, but eight only contained contributions." These were Bernard Barton, Henry Neale, Allan Cunningham, J. Bowring, J. H. Wiffen, Mrs. Gilbert, W. L. Bowles, and Barry Cornwall.†

After naming nine other individuals, to whose courtesy the editor acknowledges himself indebted, although they did not directly accede to his request, he adds, "All these distinguished characters declared themselves as friendly to the emancipation of the poor climbing-boys as their correspondent himself could be; but several doubted whether poetry would interest the public so far in their sufferings as to procure earlier redress by such appeals as were desired. That question need not be discussed here."‡ Whatever might be

* Reprinted in the Work.

† Southey's name does not appear among those forming the list of contributors to the book; but the first volume of the "Doctor" contains a chapter on the subject, which turns chiefly upon Lord Lauderdale's heartless jest, and contains the following paragraph: "James Montgomery! these remarks are too late for a place in thy 'Chimney-Sweepers' Friend;' but insert them, I pray thee, in thy newspaper, at the request of one who admires and loves thee as a poet, honours and respects thee as a man, and reaches out, in spirit, at this moment, a long arm to shake hands with thee in cordial good will." There is, likewise, a complimentary reference to Mr. Bowring's contribution, as displaying "true poetry and right feeling."—*The Doctor, &c.*, vol. i. p. 162.

‡ It may be worthy of remark, that even in the "Edinburgh Review," where Christian missions and evangelical agencies in general met with so little respect at the time (1819), the humane attempt to ameliorate the condition of the chimney-sweeper was seconded in an article written by the Rev. Sydney Smith, "Works," vol. i. pp. 347. 361.

the abstract opinion of Montgomery on this point,—and perhaps he might not have differed greatly from some of his correspondents, who, in a question between taste and philanthropy, could hardly be expected in this case to make his choice,—it is clear, from his own poetical contributions, as well as from those of other persons given in this volume, that the subject need not, at all events, degrade the willing Muse.

Rev. Dr. Croly to James Montgomery.

"8. Michael's Place, Brompton,
"London, Feb. 2. 1824.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am much indebted by your applying to me in any matter which can interest common human feeling so much as the prevention of the wretchedness of those climbing-boys; but if poetry is to be the instrument, there are no hands by which I should so much desire to see it used as your own.

"I am quite satisfied that your known and admirable powers and peculiar style would go farther to make such impression as poetry could make, than those of any other writer living.

"But I am much inclined to doubt whether poetry is the proper weapon, and whether a collection of *strong cases, well authenticated* and well told, prefaced by a few pages of the history and nature of this great grievance and disgrace to humanity and England, would not be the true mode of influencing the nation, and through them the legislature. I know that something of this kind has been done already, and that the House of Lords resisted the measure; but it was on the alleged ground that chimneys were so built as to make the employment of machinery dangerous. The answer that we must give to this, is the production of machinery that will clean the angles of the chimneys. Until this be done, no progress with the Lords can be expected.

"If I should find it in my power to assist your design in

any form of this nature, by urging your pamphlet into notice, I shall be extremely gratified. But I confess I am fully convinced that something appealing more directly to the general understanding than poetry must be employed.

"Believe me, with great respect, dear Sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"G. CROLY.

"James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

It was gratifying to find that although neither Wordsworth nor Professor Wilson actually furnished contributions, both these eminent individuals had entertained the subject as not repugnant to poetical illustration. The former thus replied to the request:—

"Rydal Mount, Jan. 24. 1824.

"I feel much for their [the climbing boys'] unhappy situation, and should be glad to see the custom of employing such helpless creatures in this way abolished. But at no period of my life have I been able to write verses that do not spring up from an inward impulse of some sort or other; so that they neither seem proposed nor imposed. . . . I should have written sooner, but it was possible that I might have fallen into a track that would have led to something."

The Professor of Moral Philosophy says:—

"Edinburgh, March 3. 1824.

"I attempted several times to write a few lines, but was unsuccessful. Should you wish to have a little prose tale, I will write one and send it to you.* Allow me, although personally unknown to you, to subscribe myself, with much esteem, and sincere wishes for your health and happiness,

"Yours,

"JOHN WILSON."

* The hope thus raised was not realised.

One exceedingly pleasing trait of these letters is the friendly greeting which they afforded the writers an opportunity of exchanging with the Sheffield bard, whose habitual diffidence too rarely brought him even into epistolary contact with his literary contemporaries. The worthy rector of Bremhill, who, after expressing a "doubt whether, on a subject so different from those which he had hitherto attempted, he would satisfy himself," nevertheless sent some verses on the LITTLE SWEEP, to show his "*animus*," as he says; adds,—

"Bremhill, Jan. 23. 1824.

"In other respects, believe me a sincere well-wisher; and felicitating myself on a circumstance that has given me an opportunity of this correspondence with a gentleman with whose name and interesting poems I have been long familiar,

"I remain, dear Sir,
"Yours, most truly,
"W. L. BOWLES."

The Bard of Memory replied in a style not less cordial:—

"22. St. James's Place, Jan. 19. 1824.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Give me leave to thank you for your most eloquent letter. If anything should suggest itself to me, worthy of such a cause, you may depend upon receiving it in due time; but I dare not speak confidently. Allow me, at all events, to congratulate myself on what I hope will lead to a farther acquaintance. If chance should bring you to London, I hope you will not forget me. I will never pass through Sheffield without doing myself the honour to call at your door.

"Believe me to be, with sincere respect,
"Yours ever,
"SAMUEL ROGERS."

Allan Cunningham accompanied a song characteristic alike of his genius and good nature, with a letter, in which he says:—

"Eccleston Street, Pimlico, Feb. 1824.

"That I wish a full and triumphant success to your benevolent undertaking you will readily imagine; and poetry will do more for human nature in one hour than it has done for a century, if it redeems the image of God from this profanation. I am glad of this opportunity to tell you how long and how much you have gratified me with your poetry; and to assure you that you have *many, many* warm admirers among men who open books, not for the sake of telling others what they think of them, but for the delight they give—the surest proof of excellence."

Sir Walter Scott, on being written to, says:—

"Abbotsford, near Melrose, Jan. 4. 1824.

"I am favoured with your letter, and should be most happy to do what would be agreeable to Mr. Montgomery; but a veteran in literature, like a veteran in arms, loses the alacrity with which young men start to the task; and I have been so long out of the habit of writing poetry, that my Pegasus has become very restive. Besides, at my best, I was never good at writing occasional verses."

Sir Walter, however, was not the man to content himself with a mere apology for doing nothing; and accordingly the editor says in his preface, that "he has contributed something towards this work, which will tell better in the end than even a poem from his own inimitable pen might have done." This was a description of the plan adopted in the construction of the vents of his then newly-erected residence at Abbotsford, and by which he had "taken care that no such

cruelty [as that exercised in the employment of boys] shall be practised within its precincts."

Miss Joanna Baillie thus writes:—

"It is very gratifying to me that you have thought me capable of assisting the good cause you have in hand; and you do me justice in supposing that I am friendly to it. But with what heart shall I do your bidding, since after having considered your benevolent plan, as well as I am able, I feel myself completely convinced that it will not serve your poor climbing-boys half so essentially as one poem of some length written by yourself. Nay, you must pardon me for being so presumptuous as to say that poetry even from your pen, or that of any of our most distinguished poets, would not be so useful to them as a plain statement of their miserable lot in prose, accompanied with a simple reasonable plan for sweeping chimneys without them. . . . And now permit me to offer you thanks for the very obliging expressions added to the circular letter by your own hand. Any approbation from a poet so distinguished is very sensibly felt by, &c."

This lady having expressed her willingness to furnish a description of the old-fashioned method of cleansing chimneys in Scotland, by working a broom up and down them, Montgomery wrote to her for it, at the same time suggesting to her a theme for verse; but her first opinion remained unchanged.

"I thank you," she says in a second letter, "for providing me with such a pretty fancy to write upon*; but you forget that I firmly believe any verses whatever would do harm

* Alluding to a passage in Montgomery's letter, in which he said he wished a poor sweep-boy would some night present himself in one of her dreams, and relate his tale of suffering in such a way as to excite her sympathy in behalf of his fellows.

instead of good. . . . It is just the way to have the whole matter considered by the sober pot-boilers over the whole kingdom as a fanciful and visionary thing. I wish, with all my heart, that threshing-machines and cotton-mills had first been recommended to the monied men by poets."*

Rev. H. H. Milman to James Montgomery.

"Reading, May 8. 1824.

"SIR,

"The circular letter you addressed to me some time since has only just reached me, having, I presume, been detained in London. The evil which you wish to counteract, and the sufferings which you are so benevolently endeavouring to alleviate, are unquestionable, and I cannot but heartily concur in wishing success to your cause. I find, however, that (even if I were convinced of the wisdom of the *means* to which you intend to have recourse, and which you must not accuse me of calculating too coldly if I consider rather questionable) I should be too late to assist you in the manner you wish, most especially as I am at present engaged in a manner which will for some time occupy my undivided attention.

"I have the honour to be,

"With great respect and esteem,

"Yours, faithfully,

"H. H. MILMAN.

"Mr. James Montgomery, Sheffield."

Dr. Smyth, the Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, says,—

* Miss Baillie having mentioned the subject of her correspondence with Montgomery to Sir Walter Scott, the latter, in a letter to that lady, remarks, "I am particularly interested with your answer to Montgomery, because it happened to be the same with mine. He applied to me for a sonnet or an elegy, instead of which I sent him an account of a manner of constructing chimneys so as scarcely to contract soot . . . but I think he would rather have had a sonnet, &c."—Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol. iv. p. 325., first ed.

"After talking with many literary people, when in town, I am but confirmed in my original notion, that no good can be done in the way in which it is proposed to attempt it. Ludicrous associations have unfortunately got connected with these poor boys; and I conceive, with others, that the Muse and the Fine Arts are more likely to suffer from this sort of connection with them, than to do them service."

Mr. Proctor, however (Barry Cornwall), whose poetical contribution is one of the best in the volume, remarks, "I have dealt *plainly* with the subject, although I don't know why soot should not produce poetical as well as natural flowers." Lamb, who deemed "the subject so unmanageable in poetry," communicated nevertheless a very characteristic little poem from Blake's "Songs of Innocence." No wonder, with such avowals from such quarters before him, the editor of the "Climbing-Boys' Album" should have struck to a somewhat querulous pitch the key-note of his own soliloquy, commencing,—

"I know they scorn the climbing-boy,
The gay, the selfish, and the proud:
I know his villanous employ
Is mockery with the thoughtless crowd," &c.

CHAP. LVI.

1824.

MONTGOMERY READS AN ESSAY ON "METEORIC STONES." — LETTER TO HANNAH BLOOMFIELD. — LETTERS TO DR. WILLIAMSON. — THE STRUGGLING STUDENT. — COLLINS, THE GLASGOW PUBLISHER. — PIRATING AND ALTERING HYMNS. — CONVERSATION. — LETTER FROM SOUTHEY. — FULL-LENGTH PORTRAIT OF THE POET. — ITS MERIT AS A LIKENESS. — MINUTE CRITICISMS. — ALOYS REDING. — EPITAPH ON THE REV. DR. CARTWRIGHT. — LETTER TO MRS. FOSTER. — INTRODUCTORY ESSAY TO COWPER. — CALVINISM. — VISIT TO BRIDLINGTON. — "A SEA PIECE." — MORALISING ON THE OCEAN. — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET.

FEB. 6. Montgomery read a Paper on "Meteoric Stones" before the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, of which he was the president. It was, however, less with a design of presenting any arguments or facts of his own on one of the least explicable phenomena of physical science, than for the purpose of presenting for discussion some notions entertained on the subject by his friend Mr. Roberts, that the poet composed, or rather introduced, this essay. He had besides received for its illustration a fragment of the noted meteoric substance which fell on the Yorkshire Wolds in 1795. This curiosity was the gift of his friend Archdeacon Wrangham, who not only felt a local as well as a philosophical interest in its history, but who, it may be added, has, in print, avowed himself a Lunarian, "in the theory of what have been called moon-stones, or aëro-liths; as previous discoveries had determined the

high probability of volcanoes in, and of slight resistance from the very scant atmosphere of the moon." *

Two volumes of the "Remains of Robert Bloomfield, author of the 'Farmer's Boy,' &c.," were published this year by the daughter of that pleasing rural poet: among others, she wrote to Montgomery, explaining that the narrow circumstances in which her father had left his family had suggested the compilation.

James Montgomery to Hannah Bloomfield.

"Sheffield, May 7. 1824.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I am exceedingly grieved to learn from your letter the distressing circumstances of your family. I scarcely knew your amiable and excellent father, except as a poet. I once saw him at the Shepherd and Shepherdess [Inn, City Road, London, where he then resided], and bespoke an Eolian harp of him. In a periodical ['Ecl. Rev.'], in the year 1811, I published an article on your father's poetry, of which the following is an extract, and you are welcome to make any use you please of it, as containing my sentiments then, which are my real sentiments now. If the work, which you mention as in contemplation, be for the benefit of your family, I shall be glad to render any little help I can in recommending it here.

"I am, truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss H. Bloomfield, Shefford, Beds."

When the work appeared, the editor of the "Iris" not only recommended it as a vehicle of aid to the poet's family, but expressed his willingness to become the

* Catalogue of the "English Portion of the Library of the Ven. Francis Wrangham, M.A., F.R.S., Archdeacon of Cleveland," 1826.

medium of any separate pecuniary contribution towards that object. The result was gratifying—he had the pleasure of remitting between twenty and thirty pounds.

About this time several letters passed between the late Dr. Williamson, of Leeds, and the Sheffield poet, chiefly with the aim of serving the Philosophical Societies of those towns respectively, by an interchange of lectures and essays to be read before the members. The worthy Doctor having gratified the Sheffield Society with an able paper on the "Philosophy of Lord Bacon," Montgomery acknowledged the service by according the use of his own lecture to the sister Institution.

James Montgomery to Dr. Williamson.

"Sheffield, May 12. 1824.

"DEAR SIR,

"As Mr. Todd does not send to Leeds before Friday, I must venture my precious manuscript alone, to take its fortune on the road. It is so crude in composition in many parts, and altogether so ill-written, that it will be necessary for you to study it very carefully, or will find yourself in such a dilemma as you little think. The whole was hastily compiled from very imperfect notes on the three days previous to the delivery of it in public, and the latter part written out even while the meeting was assembling, to serve rather as notes than text, so that the style is necessarily rambling; sentence branches out of sentence like stags' horns, running out laterally as they rise perpendicularly; and unless you are very attentive to the punctuation, bad as it is, you will be frequently bewildered, and lose all command of voice so far as due *accentuation* is concerned; while, unless you lay particular stress on this point, you will fail to communicate the little sense that there is, to the audience. I have expressly recopied the worst paragraphs, but there are many which, if you have time, you had better

rewrite yourself, or you will hardly make them out in reading. The article is so long, and indeed so heavy, that I recommend to you to close at the bottom of the thirty-eighth page, and do not attempt to flounder after me through the dark ages, the allusions to which are exceedingly meagre, and huddled together in very rude language, being desperately sketched in the last agonies of thought before I mounted the rostrum. Omitting these, you may call the essay a 'General Retrospect of Literature to the Close of the Third Century of the Christian Era;' otherwise the view pretends to come down to the end of the twelfth century; indeed, though the latter pages want polishing, I do not mean, even if I finish the sketch, to lengthen this part, brief as it is. I have to request that you will on no account let the manuscript go out of your hands, but return it to me either by coach, getting it carefully booked, or by some convenient opportunity.

"Should you find it absolutely hopeless to attempt to read this scrawl as a lecture, and have nothing to substitute, let me know, and I will try to go over at the time to Leeds, and deliver it myself. But *I mean, as I say*, only if you are in *despair*. I have no leisure to copy the whole over again, or I would have done so rather than hazard both your credit and mine. I have no other copy.

"I am truly, your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P.S. Pray write to say that it is safe in your hands.

"James Wilkinson, Esq., M. D., Leeds."

The members of the Leeds Society were naturally anxious to hear the poet's essay read by its author; but as the time drew near he appears to have been very willing to persuade himself of the necessity of accepting his friend as an able and willing representative in the rostrum.

James Montgomery to Dr. Williamson.

"Sheffield, May 19. 1824.

"DEAR SIR,

"I must be beholden to your kindness to read my crude essay to your Philosophical Society on Friday next. It would have been no inconvenience at all to me to have made Leeds in my way to Fulneck this week. I wish to go thither, but at present I find myself so spiritless, and so much engaged with little affairs at home, that I have not courage to set out. I have had a struggle for three days in my mind, and inclination must yield to constitutional infirmity, which for some months past has been completely lord of the ascendant in my little system of mental and bodily economy — I ought to say derangement rather, for almost everything is out of order. I purposed to have spent two or three weeks in London at the beginning of this month, but my heart failed, and here I am and must be. You may make what *omissions* you please in reading the manuscript, and this *will relieve you.*

"I am, very truly, your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P.S. Please to return the MS. in the course of a few days, by coach. I cannot contrive a surer conveyance.

"Dr. Williamson, Park Place, Leeds."

He took an active part in another movement of co-operative kindness having a personal object. A young man, who was employed in one of the Sheffield manufactories, having by dint of self-instruction made considerable progress in acquiring the rudiments of classical knowledge, and being withal a pious, as well as a studious individual, Montgomery concurred with several other gentlemen in raising a fund to maintain him for a time at the University of Glasgow; and for this purpose he personally waited upon certain wealthy indi-

viduals. On his return home one afternoon, after attending a meeting relative to the design just mentioned, he found Mr. Collins, the Scottish publisher, awaiting an interview; his object being to engage the poet to compile a volume of Hymns, with the accompaniment of a Prefatory Essay. The proposal so far met the views of Montgomery, who had himself occasionally contemplated such a collection, that he agreed to undertake the work for one hundred guineas; and not only to do that, but previously to write an Introductory Essay to an edition of Cowper's Poems, about to be issued by the firm * represented by his visitor; thus laying the foundation, as we shall see, of a long, pleasant, and profitable intercourse with his spirited countryman.†

June 7. Montgomery attended the annual meeting of the Sheffield Sunday School Union, and read a long "Retrospect" of the proceedings and success of the Institution during the twelve years of its existence.

July 20. Mr. Holland called in the Hartshead to borrow Todd's book on Psalmody, at the same time adverting to the Collection of Hymns used in St. Paul's Church at Sheffield. *Montgomery* (playfully): "I hope you are not about to reprint that hymn-book; if so,

* At that period "Chalmers and Collins," the former a brother of the celebrated Scottish preacher, with whom the design of these serial volumes originated.

† William Collins died Jan. 2. 1853. Montgomery always spoke with respect of a man, who had not only manifested decided piety from his youth, and who made his business subservient to the republication of a series of excellent Christian authors, but who produced the plan which, in conjunction with his friend Dr. Chalmers, he laboured to promote, and actually lived to see realised,—of building twenty additional churches in Glasgow!—Vide his *Funeral Sermon*, p. 19.

I give you notice in time that you will do so at your peril, as I am one of its legal guardians." *Holland:* "I thought the copyright belonged to the Archbishop of York?" *Montgomery:* "No; it belongs to Mrs. Cotterill; and it ought to be a fortune for her: but clerical patronage is, you know, often very tardy; and many persons have been anxious to pounce upon the book most unceremoniously. One publisher at York, even before Mr. Cotterill's death, applied to the Archbishop for that purpose, and his Grace unwittingly assented; but on the representation being made of the claims of the real owner of the copyright, the permission was withdrawn. The same individual, immediately on hearing of the compiler's death, had the effrontery to repeat the request! Another party obtained a number of copies from London, tore out of the sheet the original title-page and dedication to the Archbishop, and substituted others bearing his own name! Good Mr. Cotterill and I bestowed a great deal of labour and care on the compilation of that book; clipping, interlining, and remodelling hymns of all sorts, as we thought we could correct the sentiment or improve the expression." *Holland:* "And thus *you*, who have such a dread of posthumous or other alterations*, could be largely

* Montgomery had an opportunity, not long afterwards, of testing his own feelings on this point. The Rev. John Jackson, vicar of Over, applied to the Bishop of Chester to be allowed to introduce into his church the Collection of Hymns authorised by the Archbishop of York. The reply was a refusal, accompanied by the remark that even the Metropolitan himself had no power to sanction such a work. After the removal of Dr. Tomline from Chester to London, a Collection of Hymns published under his auspices was shown to Montgomery: after reading the preface, and congratulating the prelate on his more liberal views, he turned to the general contents of the book, and found six or seven hymns under his own name, but so altered that he said he would be ashamed to defend any one of them *as his!*

guilty of mangling the productions of other hymnologists!" *Montgomery:* "More guilty than I should like to believe you will ever be; but when I am gone, my hymns will no doubt be altered to suit the taste of appropriators; for it is astonishing how really religious persons will sometimes feel scruples about a turn or a term. We have so altered some of Cowper's, that the poet would hardly know them in their present form: for example, I entirely rewrote the first verse of that favourite hymn, commencing —

> "'There is a fountain filled with blood,
> Drawn from Immanuel's veins,' &c.

The words are objectionable as representing a fountain being *filled,* instead of *springing up:* I think my version is unexceptionable: —

> "'From Calvary's cross a fountain flows,
> Of water and of blood;
> More healing than Bethesda's pool,
> Or famed Siloa's flood.'" *

Holland: "Did not Mr. Cotterill, in reality, make the selection finally approved by and dedicated to the Archbishop, after the attempt to get an inhibition of the book?" *Montgomery:* "Mr. Cotterill selected the hymns, and submitted them to his Grace, who objected to some of them; indeed, he acted with a great deal of firmness and wisdom in a very delicate case."

Mr. George Bennet having sent home from the South Sea Islands a collection of natural and artificial curiosities, comprising idols, weapons, personal ornaments, &c.,

* This is, of course, a perfectly unobjectionable verse; but it may be doubted whether the objection alleged against the original verse was sufficiently strong to justify the presumed amendment.

Montgomery resolved to present the bulk of them to the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society.* He appeared a good deal concerned about the probable effects on the mission from the death of the king and queen of the Sandwich Islands, of the measles. *Holland:* "It is said the measles are more dangerous in their effect on persons who have not had the small-pox." *Montgomery* (who was a staunch advocate for vaccination): "I suppose your grandmother told you so: have you been vaccinated?" *Holland:* "Yes; and suffered severely with the measles afterwards."† *Montgomery:* "Have you written any verses on the death of Smith, the Missionary, at Demerara? I was applied to for that purpose some time since; but declined at first, because I could not consider the deceased a martyr. I made this my excuse for non-compliance with the request: but I was again pressed by his friend, and have composed some stanzas having reference mainly to his interment, which took place secretly at night,—every person, even his widow, being prohibited from following the corpse; though Mrs. Smith, merely accompanied by a negro carrying a lantern, braved the risk, and contrived to be present when the body of her husband was consigned to the grave."‡

Montgomery: "Have you seen these stanzas on the death of Lord Byron? There are others afloat; but these only seem to be at all worthy of the occasion."

* These articles are now in the Society's museum.

† Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, as well as several of the royal children, had the measles in the summer of 1853; happily, the attack was mild in each case.

‡ "A Deed of Darkness."—*Works*, vol. i. p. 197. It afterwards appeared from the date of these lines, which were first published in the Iris under the title of "The Missionary's Funeral," that they were finished on the day of the conversation.

Holland: "They are by Dr. Bowring, I believe; and are equal to the 'Humanity at Home' in the 'Sweep's Album.'" *Montgomery:* "I have no doubt but they are his; and, as you intimate, they do remind one of the verses in the 'Album': like them, too, they appear to have been struck off at a heat: the middle portion is very fine." *Holland:* "Yes; the feeling of the subject is there: the first stanza was probably written afterwards, as an introduction to, and the last as a reflection on, that passage." *Montgomery:* "But the representation of Lord Byron's appearance as a spectre on Parnassus is very striking." *Holland:* "So it is; but I think somewhat injured in effect by the commonplace epithet of 'white-robed.'" *Montgomery:* "Yes; it reminds us of the familiar 'white-robed innocence:' but that is only one of the many common articles of the wardrobe of poetry."

Robert Southey to James Montgomery.

"Keswick, July 24. 1824.

"MY DEAR MONTGOMERY,

"You wrote me a very kind and gratifying letter in November last, which I received at a time when it was not possible to answer it; for, from the time you saw me till the middle of February, I was perpetually engaged in travelling or in society. During that course of locomotion, your circular reached me, and if I could have written anything for your well-intended volume, in any way tolerable, you should have had it. But the truth is, that, from long disuse, I have lost all facility of writing upon occasional subjects. These matters premised, now for the reason why I have neglected to write ever since: it is not a very good one, I confess, and yet, such as it is, it must be told. Before I departed from London, Longmans sent me 'Prose by a Poet, from an old Friend.' I meant to read it in the country, but when I packed up my boxes for exportation thither, by some acci-

dent these volumes were left behind; they had, as they were likely to do, found readers, and it was not till the day before yesterday that they found their way to me in a box of varieties from the great city. Meantime, in daily expectation of their arrival, I have waited week after week, not liking to thank you for them till I could say that I had perused them with pleasure, — though that I should peruse anything of yours with that feeling might, with the strictest truth, have been said.

"The poetry would have filiated itself: the prose might otherwise have puzzled me where to father it; though there also I find a clue in the localities, and in the first page of the second volume, which fixes the age of the writer to be within a few years of my own. With these indications, and with the moral, political, and religious features of the book, I could not long be at a loss where to look for the author. The title is quite appropriate; none but a poet could have written such prose.

"Do you know that your version of 'Pen, Ink, and Paper' has been stolen, and altered to fit the ill-feelings of the thief? I saw it in a number of the 'Lady's Magazine;' and had the satisfaction of finding in it as much abuse of myself as any reasonable man could desire to meet with. By the way, let me tell you that in your friendly judgment as expressed in this vision, you are mistaken in representing me as a rapid writer. Unfortunately I have, for very many years, been a very slow versifier.

"Your experiment upon Ossian confirms a remark which I remember to have heard Coleridge make, some five-and-twenty years ago, that Macpherson's rhythm was made up of fragments of hexameters and pentameters: you will see how apparent this is in your own version, which to my ear is very pleasing.

"My heart goes with you in your moral speculations. Such papers as those upon Old Women and Juvenile Delinquency cannot be sent into the world without producing some good. I too have been probing the wounds of society. I hope, in the course of the next season, to send you my specu-

lations upon its progress and prospects, in a series of Colloquies, to which I have prefixed as a motto three pregnant words from St. Bernard, — respice, aspice, prospice. You may differ — yet not I think materially — from some of the opinions advanced there; but the general tendency and fundamental principles will have your full concurrence. I want more order, more discipline, less liberty to do ill, more encouragement, more help to do well. I want to impress both upon the rulers and the people a sense of their respective duties; for in truth we have at this time reached a more critical period in the progress of society than history has ever before unfolded. The full effects of the discovery of printing have never been apprehended till now; the pressure of population has never till now been felt in a Christian country (I hope you know that I abhor Malthus's abominable views) — the consequences of an unlimited and illimitable creation of wealth have never before been dreamt of; and, to crown all, there is even a probability that the art of war may be made so excellently destructive as to put an end to it. How I should like to talk with you upon some of these wide-branching subjects among the mountains!

"Before the Colloquies appear, I shall show you that I am not altogether defunct as a poet. At present, I am, in good, resolute earnest, finishing my tale of 'Paraguay,' which was commenced ten years ago. The delay has been, in no small degree, owing to the choice of metre; for it is written in Spenser's stanza, which I found very easy four-and-thirty years ago (when I planned and commenced a continuation of the 'Faery Queen'), and now find very difficult. But it suits the meditative character of my story. And now, my dear Montgomery, forgive my sins of omission, and believe me to be, with equal esteem and affection,

"Yours most truly,

"Robert Southey.

"P. S. I must not omit to thank you for your offer of hospitality at Sheffield. I will take that course one day for the purpose of accepting it when I am travelling alone. Will you give my kind regards to Mr. Everett, and to Mr. Elliott if you see him. Once more, farewell, and God bless you."

Mr. Barber, a respectable artist from Derby, being on a professional visit at Sheffield this summer, it was suggested to some of the members of the Literary and Philosophical Society — by a lady, we believe — that an opportunity was afforded for obtaining a portrait of their president; and thus at once paying an appropriate compliment to the poet, and providing an ornament for their museum. A meeting of the members was held to consider the subject, at which Dr. Knight proposed, and Mr. Everett seconded, a resolution to the effect that a full-length portrait of Mr. Montgomery should be painted by Mr. Barber: the stipulated price, one hundred and fifty guineas, to be raised by subscription.

August 5. The artist began the picture in the large room at the Tontine Inn, which was gratuitously lent for the occasion. During the entire progress of the painting, which occupied about seven days, Mr. Everett was present at the sittings; he thus not only watched the development of the portrait, suggesting various improvements in detail, but he devised all the accessories; and, what was of more importance, kept alive by his conversation that expression of countenance which was, in the issue, so successfully fixed on the canvas. When the picture was finished, as the room destined for its ultimate reception at the Music Hall was not ready, it was confided to the care of Mr. Everett, who determined to allow it to be seen at his house in Market Place. Between fifteen and sixteen hundred persons — including most of Montgomery's more respectable townspeople — availed themselves of this "private view;" the collective expression of their opinions* being strongly

* As Mr. Everett had provided a book in which he desired the visitors to write their names, it presently occurred to him to preserve also a record of the opinions expressed concerning the picture. These, like the criticisms of the Carians on the picture of Apelles,

in favour of the fidelity of the likeness, and generally of the composition of the picture as a whole—the more intelligent exceptions, in an artistic point of view, affecting merely the introduction of too many objects of subordinate interest.* As Mr. Everett was about to leave Sheffield for London, he determined, before parting with the picture, to treat the public with a sight of it—for this purpose, placing it opposite a large window fronting the street! This experiment was *too successful* to be risked for more than a single day, during which thousands crowded the exhibition; and most of them, often in terms more expressive than refined, avowing their admiration of the *vera effigies* of one whom they so generally knew and so highly respected.

Two other circumstances incidentally connected with the execution of this portrait may be here mentioned. 1. One morning, Montgomery came to the painting-room, accompanied by a person who had introduced himself as the nephew and namesake of the Helvetian hero, Aloys Reding, mentioned in the "Wanderer of Switzerland:" of the trustworthiness of this plausible stranger the poet had afterwards reason to entertain strong suspicions.† 2. When notices of the

similarly obtained, were often of a very conflicting nature; and the patient and curious minuteness of these memoranda, made by him, *more suo*, in upwards of seventy closely-written pages of a paper book now existing, forms an amusing—and, considering how many of the parties mentioned are dead, an affecting—chapter of local history.

* These opinions have been confirmed by parties who have most admired the portrait in the Museum of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, at the Music Hall, of which crowded and badly-lighted room it is the principal ornament, and to strangers the chief attraction. The head was copied for an engraving, published, 1828, in the "Imperial Magazine," and accompanied with a memoir of Montgomery by Mr. Holland.

† A still more apocryphal interloper of this class presented

portrait appeared in the local newspapers, they were followed by letters, suggesting the exhibition of some more general token of respect to the poet, in the shape of a public dinner—a proposal which he contrived to stifle at the time, only, however, to be revived at a more auspicious opportunity, which presently occurred.

We have already adverted to the correspondence between Montgomery and the venerable author of the ballad of "Armine and Elvira." He died in the course of this year, and his widow, avowing her determination to erect a monument to his memory in Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's Cathedral, importuned our friend to write an epitaph. After repeated solicitation, he composed the following:—

"*To the Memory of the late Rev. Dr. Cartwright, an ingenious Poet; also the Inventor of Power Looms, and other Machinery of extraordinary Utility in the Woollen Cloth Manufacture. He died, aged* 81, *in* 1823.

"Hadst thou pursued thine early path to fame,
Verse might have won thee an immortal name;
Thy patriot-genius scorned the selfish part,
Yoked its free spirit with inventive art,
And wrung new powers from Nature's secret hand
To bless, enrich, exalt thy native land:
An age may come when thou shalt be forgot,
None to thy master-mind indebted not;
No future skill can make thy labours vain,—
They wrought a link in an eternal chain.

"Sept. 6. 1824."

---

himself several years afterwards, and pretending a close relationship to the Moravian worthy, De Watteville. After practising largely on the credulity of the good people at Fulneck, he ventured to call upon Montgomery, who immediately instituted such inquiries as led to the detection of a large tissue of impostures on the part of the pseudo-Moravian adventurer.

The poet has appended to these lines a note to the effect that Dr. Cartwright's widow informed him that her husband had expended 40,000*l.* in the objects alluded to, while the only remuneration which he received was a grant of 10,000*l.* by Parliament in 1807.

This somewhat reluctant compliance with the wishes of a lady with whom we are not aware that Montgomery had the slightest personal acquaintance, led, about two years afterwards, to a still more unanticipated request on her part—viz. that he would undertake to write a life of Dr. Cartwright; her relative, Major Worthington, having died on the brink of that project: the task was of course declined.

The following letter, purely personal as it is, contains so many touches of that piety and affection which characterised most of the epistles of the uncle to the niece at this period, that a reader must be "ungentle" indeed who can refuse to become, for the moment at least, interested in its contents.

James Montgomery to Mrs. Edmund Foster.

"Sheffield, Sept. 14. 1824.

"DEAR BETSY.

"Miss Sarah Gales is sending you some remembrance, and I must do the same, though it only be a few lines, to thank you, as I do most cordially, for a kind letter or two received from you, and not yet acknowledged. I am a bad correspondent to everybody, and to my best friends I am the worst, because they are the most forgiving. I have also to thank you for the very elegant and tasteful present of ladies' work,—it might have been fairies' work, it was so beautiful and delicate. The little poem of 'Sarepta,' and other pieces, have duly arrived, and deserve respectful commendation of the author's consecrated talents. This is indeed an age of poetry; and there is so much good poetry written, that little can gain attention unless it be of the

highest order, and on the most popular theme. Your friend must not be surprised, amidst such a multitude of authors, and such a dearth of readers, to be like 'a voice crying in the wilderness,' especially when proclaiming, 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord,' because to such sounds, though they are good tidings of great joy, and addressed to all people, both hearts and ears are resolutely shut, till God by his own Spirit open both. O my dear niece, may you, and I, and all our dear connections, at Woolwich, at Sheffield, and elsewhere, know that joyful sound, and prepare a way in the desert of our hearts to receive and welcome Him who came from heaven to save us from our sins, and from the eternal and miserable consequences of our sins! It always rejoices me, even to tears, when I receive or read letters from you, to find that those happy, and I verily believe heavenly, impressions of the love of God which were made on your young heart when you were with us at Sheffield, are not done away,—never can be done away,—but that in your present hurry and bustle of life, they are your comfort and your hope. May they ever be so! I intended to have visited London in May last, when I should have spent as much time as I could at Woolwich. All necessary preparations were made, but my courage failed when I ought to have set out, and I gave up the scheme in a moment which I had cherished for months. I am now meditating a journey, and must set out next week,—yet I have not determined where to go. So undecided and hesitating I am, even in my choice of pleasures, which to *me* are accompanied with so much pain, anxiety, and restlessness, that I have very little enjoyment in them at any time. In health I am at present pretty well, but my mind and my feelings are so continually exercised and harassed in the situation which I fill, that I am often ready to lie down and give all up, or fly away if I could and hide myself from everybody and everything but that which I must carry with me wherever I go—my own heart, and this is quite enough to keep me alive by plaguing me to death.—Give my kindest love to your father, and mother, and Harriet.

Shall I ever see you all again? I would that we could all meet in some quiet place, but that must not yet be. I was at Fulneck last week. John James is grown amazingly, both in stature and in learning, and I think in grace too. He is a most promising youth, and it would do you good to see his ingenuous countenance, and hear his sober discourse, at the same time mingled with sufficient sprightliness to make him very agreeable. He will not break his father's heart or disappoint his mother's hopes, as some of my Fulneck lads did in former times. This at least is my wish, and prayer, and confidence. Remember me also to your esteemed husband. Every blessing of this world and the next I implore for you both, and your little one, and as many more as may be given you. Pray for the same for yourselves, and your prayer will be answered. Your way will be made clear before you, and you will be preserved from the evil that is in the world, as well as delivered from that which is in your own bosoms. Respects to your father-in-law. I am truly,

"Your affectionate uncle,
"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P. S. Just tell your father (though he deserves to hear nothing about poor Ignatius, he has so neglected him) that Ignatius *almost* forgives his long and cruel silence, for the sake of the kind token of love which Robert sent to John James by one of the teachers who lately visited Woolwich. Had it been a thousand times more valuable than it was, from one indifferent, it would not have delighted his brother more.

"Mrs. Edmund Foster, Woolwich."

In the month of October Montgomery finished the "Introductory Essay" which appeared with an edition of Cowper's Poems, published by Chalmers and Collins at the close of this year. One of the most striking passages in this "Essay" refers to that melancholy and mysterious eclipse of the light of God's countenance

by *some* intervening shadow, which obscured alike the rational and religious sunset of the poet's existence on earth: these are the words:—

"With regard to his [Cowper's] malady, there scarcely needs any other proof that it was not occasioned by his religion than this, that the error on which he stumbled was in direct contradiction to his creed. He believed that he had been predestinated to life, yet under this delusion imagined that that God, who could not lie, repent, or change, had in his sole instance*, and in one moment, reversed His own decree, which had been in force from all eternity. At the same time, by a perversion of the purest principle of Christian obedience, he was so submitted to the will of God that, to have saved himself from the very destruction which he dreaded, he would not avail himself of any of the means of grace, even presuming they might have been efficacious [a presumption which, of course, *he* did *not* entertain], because he believed that they were forbidden to him. Yet, in spite of the self-evident impossibility of his faith affecting a sound mind with such an hallucination,—though a mind previously diseased might as readily fall into that as any other;—in spite of chronology,—his first aberration of reason having taken place before he had 'tasted the good word of God;'—in spite of geography,—that calamity having befallen him in London, where he had no acquaintance with persons holding the reprobated doctrines of election and sovereign grace;—and in spite of the fact, utterly undeniable, that, till his spirit was revived by the

* In a very ingenious and affecting letter, dated Jan. 13. 1784, Cowper, after writing at some length about his spiritual despondency, adds—"Eleven years, in which I have spoken no other language, is a long time for a man, whose eyes were once opened, to spend in darkness; long enough to make despair an inveterate habit. My friends, I know, *think it necessary to the existence of Divine truth that he who once had possession of it should never finally lose it. I admit the validity of this reasoning in every case but my own.*" The italics are ours.

success of his poetry, the only effectual consolations which he ever knew, after the first access of insanity, were the consolations of the Gospel, at St. Albans, at Huntingdon, and at Olney; — in spite of all these unanswerable confutations of the ignorant and malignant falsehood, the enemies of Christian truth persevere in repeating 'that too much religion made poor Cowper mad.'"

Aware as we are that the subject alluded to is a most delicate one, and admitting, as we must, Montgomery's ability to deal with it, no less on the score of his knowledge of evangelical doctrine, than on account of his sympathetic experience with some of the spiritual exercises of the pious bard of Olney, we are compelled to say that we think our friend has rather evaded than elucidated this painful *crux* in the history of Cowper's mind. In the assertion that it was *not* religion that made him mad, we, of course, most cordially concur: that it *was* to religion he owed the only effectual consolations which he ever knew, is abundantly testified by his poems and his letters. But the material question is — had *Calvinism* anything to do, not with producing the "access," but in determining or at least influencing the character of his mental malady? Montgomery says "the error on which he stumbled was in direct contradiction to his creed;" what that creed was, is, in the passage itself, rather hinted at than explained: but let it be fairly stated that, in the doctrinal system which Cowper had been led to embrace, the counter-figment of "predestination to life" is "reprobation to death," and that these are the results of a decree of God in reference to individuals, fixed from eternity. Taking this view of the subject, we think the true source of the poet's despair is traceable to the fact of his turning toward himself the gloomy side of this unscriptural creed. True it is, the notion that "God, who could not lie,

repent, or change, had in this sole instance and in one moment reversed his own decree, which had been in force from eternity," was a "delusion;" but so also, in our opinion, is the notion that the destiny of every human spirit is irreversibly and eternally fixed by any such decree.

Marvellous as the incongruous notion of God's reversal of his own decree may seem to a sound mind in general, some of the most eminent expounders of Calvinism appear to have broached an opinion nearly akin to, if not actually identical with, it. Mr. Reid, in his Memoir of Dr. Twisse, the prolocutor of the celebrated "Assembly of Divines," says, the Doctor "maintained, as several eminently orthodox divines have done, 'that God, by his absolute power, *setting aside his decree* or free constitution, can forgive sin without any satisfaction.'" Justly has it been said, "What a horrid outcry would have been raised, had any famous Arminian divine of that juncture [1643] propounded such a sentiment!"*

The essayist contends — every one admits — that the first access of Cowper's insanity was succeeded and dispelled by the consolations of the Gospel; and moreover, that those consolations were, in turn, finally obscured and annihilated by the reascendency of his mental complaint: the conclusion may be ungracious to Calvinism, but it seems conformable alike to reason and fact, that the gloomy fatalism of his creed was the perilous and natural material out of which his morbid fancy drew

* Nichols's "Calvinism and Arminianism compared in their Principles and Tendency: or, the Doctrines of General Redemption, as held by the Members of the Church of England and by the early Dutch Arminians, exhibited in their Scripture Evidence and in their Connexion with the Civil and Religious Liberties of Mankind," p. 468.

the evidence of his final reprobation; where else could even insanity have found it? Indeed, after all that has been written in extenuation of the charge that poor Cowper's religious despair was not unconnected with the predestinarian error, he really appears in some of the most painful phases of his delusion to have acted more consistently than many who profess a similar creed. So far as Montgomery has aimed to disprove the blatant assertion "that too much religion made poor Cowper mad," his Christian testimony has not been recorded in vain: but in his attempt to exonerate "persons holding the reprobated doctrines of election and sovereign grace" from all the consequences of those doctrines upon a "mind diseased," he appears to have mistaken a charitable hope for a logical conclusion.

In the month of October he went to Bridlington, and during the whole period of his stay there the weather was so fine that he walked out every day except one. Of this visit, we have a poetical memento in the "Three Sonnets" descriptive of scenes witnessed from the Quay, and which appear in his collected works under the title of "A Sea Piece."* They have been regarded by judges, and were considered by the author, as the best original poems in this form which he ever wrote. It may be interesting to mention, as illustrative of Montgomery's habit of composing while travelling, that the whole of these sonnets, with the exception of about six lines of the first, were excogitated and written on the road between Bridlington and York. The original sketch in minute pencilling lies before us: as it differs materially from the printed version, we give the lines for comparison, and as showing with what correct taste the poet elaborated the perfect picture out of the first faint sketch.

* Works, p. 315.

"At nightfall, walking on the cliff-crowned shore,
Where sea and sky were in each other lost,
Ships shot like meteors through the huge uproar,
Of these shall many a merchant rue the cost.
I marked one anchored vessel tempest-tost,
The surges bounding to the clouds hung o'er
The highest masts, and deck and rigging crossed,
A moment, then it seemed to be no more;
Yet while the cables and the anchors stand,
Like a chained lion ramping at his foes,
Backward and forward still it plunged and rose,
Till broke the cable; headlong then to land
It scudded o'er the waves to cure its woes,
Fixed like a rock 'twas left upon the strand."

The second sonnet will be found to have undergone scarcely less alteration than the first: the subjoined is from the original draft:—

"The morn was beautiful, the storm gone by;
Three days had past; I gazed upon the main,
A molten mirror, an unbounded plain,
Calm as the blue, sublime o'erarching sky:
Fixed on the strand, I saw that vessel lie,
Its bow towards the deep, and, without stain,
Its white wings spread to sun and breeze in vain,
Like a maimed eagle, impotent to fly:
'Tis fixed, and fixed for ever may abide,
For down the level beach hath gone the tide,
Its mingled murmur lowly strikes mine ear;
Checked in the onset of its gay career,
Ingloriously to rot and perish here."

The expression "maimed eagle," which occurs above, was unfortunately altered, by a slip of the pen in transcribing the sonnet for the press, into "chained eagle;" and so it was printed, greatly to Montgomery's annoyance, in the collected edition of his poems: it showed,

said he, not only poverty of language, as the word "chained" had occurred in the previous sonnet, but did not convey his meaning as intended by the term "maimed." The third sonnet presents in the printed copy still more striking deviations from the original. Whatever may be thought generally of the value of these alterations, they may be studied with advantage by the young poet, who will hereby perceive to what elaborate revision even a master in song thought it necessary to submit the record of first impressions before venturing to address the public. The following is the third sonnet: —

"Not so: — spring tides return, the hollow bay
Received the exulting ocean in its breast;
The multitude of waves, like squadrons pressed
Of war-steeds, fleck'd with foam and scattering spray,
The power and thunder of the loud array,
Hath broke that vessel's ignominious rest;
To her own element, with bounding breast,
She rushes from the beach — she skims away,
Ploughing the surges like a startled whale
Struck by the hunter; every swelling sail
Is to the freedom of the wind unfurled;
The river billows right and left are hurled:
Go, gallant bark, with such a sea and gale,
I pledge thee for a voyage round the world."

But besides these poetical mementos of this visit, we have, although unacknowledged by Montgomery, a prose one, in the following passage of a Bible Society Report read by him immediately on his return home: —

"It is impossible to contemplate the ocean with indifference: the eye is alternately delighted with beauty and overpowered with magnificence; the ear is entranced with

harmony the most soothing, or appalled with the thunder of sounds the most awful in nature; but it is to the mind, when imagination discovers all that is invisible, and thought penetrates through all that is unconnected with the senses, —it is to the mind that this stupendous phenomenon reveals its hidden majesty, and justifies the sacred comparison of the judgments of God to 'a great deep.' There is something transporting in the expanse of waters shining under the light and verging to immensity on every side; the bosom of the spectator is enlarged to take in 'the sea and the fulness thereof,' but there is terror in the approach; —'there is but a step between him and death,' and he feels himself in the presence of a power, which, lovely and alluring as it seems in *its place*, warns *him* to keep in his own, lest with a touch it should sweep him into eternity. In such a mood when we gaze upon the ocean, we think of the treasures which the sun hath never seen, concealed in its caverns, embedded in its rocks, or enclosed in its shells;— we think of the wrecked merchandise that strews its pavement;—the dead of all ages that slumber in its abysses till the day of resurrection;—the innumerable living creatures, which inhabit its strange world, without air, or light, or warmth, the sources of our animal comforts, yet capable of enjoyments to us incomprehensible;—we think of the ships sailing on its surface, in every direction, on commerce, adventure, discovery, destruction, or mercy;—of the perils which mariners encounter, and the wonders which they see, while they do their business in great waters;—above all, we think of the shores which the tide visits, the eyes which are continually fixed on its fluctuations, and the hearts that are aching or rejoicing between hope and anxiety, expectation and despair;—we think of man as he is, throughout every land which he possesses, under every form which he bears, and in every character which he assumes,—civilised, savage, or semi-barbarian, bond and free; Jew, Turk, Pagan, and Christian."

He then proceeded to remark that Britain, as an

island, had the double advantage of being divided from the rest of the world for her security, and united with the uttermost parts of it for friendly intercourse with all nations; hence her greatness — her glory, independence, and power — and her consequent obligation to give to other nations that which has been the source of her own highest felicity — the Bible.

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, Dec. 16. 1824.

"My dear Friend,

"This packet will be tenfold welcome, because it contains remembrances from many quarters. Your letters, dated from on board the vessel which I hope has long ere now landed you in New South Wales, were lately received, and, brief as they were, none that ever reached us from the other side of the world, even under your hand and seal, were more gratefully welcomed, because the 'hope deferred,' till 'the heart' was almost 'sick' of hearing that you were actually turning your face towards the setting sun till he should become the rising sun, had made us anxiously expect the arrival of your next communications; these, when they came, were indeed 'a tree of life,' and we have now begun to think that probable, which heretofore we looked upon as merely possible; namely, that we may yet see your face again in the flesh, and hear from your lips, what we always read with delight from your pen, the great things which the Lord hath done for you, and in you, and by you, since we parted. Your letters and packages, by the returned vessel from the South Seas in October last, came to hand, and were exceedingly acceptable. The share of shells and other curiosities, which were forwarded to me from London, have been distributed according to the best of my judgment among your friends here, with the consent and advice of Mr. Rowland Hodgson, Mr. Samuel Roberts,

and Mr. Read, whom I consulted in everything. The artificial articles, arms, ornaments, cases, &c., &c., we deemed it best to present to *The Literary and Philosophical Society's Museum here*, where they will be preserved entire, and always open to the public inspection. Had we divided them, they would have been of [comparatively] little value to anybody; whereas, being thus preserved and dedicated, they will be a treasure, even to posterity, with your townspeople. You mention in your late letter something about these or similar packages, and desire that something may be given to the Rotherham College.* This shall be done, if anything else arrives; but as you gave no such instructions before, it was not thought of in the distribution; indeed, I was not aware of any museum there. I have little intelligence to communicate. Mr. Joseph Bailey, of Burngreave, died in the spring of this year; I mentioned poor Mary's departure, in the autumn preceding, in my last letter. Mr. Rowland Hodgson is still very feeble, and leads a suffering life: he and I were together for a few weeks at Bridlington Quay, whence he wrote to you. Mr. Roberts and his family are pretty well; he writes to you by this conveyance. . . . . An old and most amiable acquaintance of yours lately died at Chesterfield, full of faith, and patience, and hope that shall not be ashamed, I verily believe,—Joseph Storrs. Mr. Hodgson and I were at his house a few weeks before his end, and he seemed then calmly and delightfully undressing for the grave, and clothing for immortality. His end was peace. Your name, I may say, is never forgotten at our anniversaries of Christian Institutions, and if not absolutely mentioned, is remembered with feelings of affection, and regret, and desire, by those who have been wont to see you leading the van in every engagement against the powers of darkness, shining in the whole armour of light. O, how glad shall we be to hail you back again, should the merciful providence of God again unite us personally in works of faith and love!

* Institution for the Education of Independent Ministers.

Where you are I know not, and even less can I imagine where these lines will meet you; but this I know, that you cannot be where the Lord is not; and as his presence is here and in every place, in Him we are not separated—may never be so.

"I am, your affectionate friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., New South Wales, or elsewhere."

CHAP. LVII.

1825.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE LITERARY AND PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. — MEMOIR IN "EUROPEAN MAGAZINE."— CONVERSATION.— FORMATION OF MECHANICS' LIBRARY. — MONTGOMERY ELECTED PRESIDENT. — CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. BROUGHAM. — LETTER TO THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE. — LETTER FROM JOHN CLARE.— TO THE REV. T. LESSEY. — MONTGOMERY ACCOMPANIES MR. EVERETT TO HALIFAX. — CONVERSATION BY THE WAY. — PUBLIC MEETING. — SUNDAY-SCHOOL MEETING. — ILLNESS AND SENTIMENTS OF THE POET. — GOES TO HARROGATE.— LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET.— TO DR. WILLIAMSON. — SCHOOL MEETING. — "THE WIDOW AND THE FATHERLESS."— VISITORS FROM NEW YORK. — ACCOUNT OF THEIR INTERVIEW WITH MONTGOMERY.

JANUARY 7. Mr. Everett was present at the Annual Meeting of the Literary and Philosophical Society, when Montgomery read a report of the proceedings of the year which had just transpired under his own presidency. He appeared in excellent spirits; and, on the list of Essays and Lectures being mentioned, said "that is one of the most interesting pages in the current history of Sheffield; and I doubt whether any similar society, out of London, could produce such a record — exhibiting, as it does, evidence of cultivated thought and curious research; and with one exception [Dr. Williamson, of Leeds], the whole from our own townsmen."*

* It is remarkable that neither in the Annual Reports, Minutes of General Proceeding, nor in the Council-book of the Society, is there one word in reference to the Portrait which is the principal

Jan. 17. We took tea with Montgomery, at the Rev. C. Atmore's. The conversation was chiefly on the solemn topics of death and the resurrection, as suggested by the sudden departure from this life of a common friend. We were struck with the scriptural tone of the poet's remarks, as well as by the extent and precision of his textual knowledge; and to which our brief minute of the interview does no justice. He dwelt, with deep feeling, on the apostle's triumphant affirmation, "for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain;" adding, in reference to the words "it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power," &c., "the apostle seems there actually to be carried out of himself.

ornament of their museum. The January number of the "European Magazine" contained a memoir of Montgomery, with an engraving from Bird's portrait of him. It is, perhaps, the least faithful as a likeness, and most *outre* as a whole, of the many prints to which his name has been affixed. "When you see it," said the poet to Mr. Everett, "you will be fit to spit upon it. Miss Gales has been scolding me about it; but I told her that if I really was the ugliest man in Sheffield, and artists chose to represent me as such, I could not help it." Writing to his brother Ignatius on the same subject, he says,—"At length I am able to return your miniature, with a proof impression of the engraving, and a copy of the 'European Magazine.' I never looked half so brazen as Bird has made me, nor half so hideous as the plate represents me. I know nothing of the parties concerned in this business except the names and general character of the publishers, who are respectable. The memoir, you will see, is a meagre abridgment of that which appeared in the 'Mirror' eighteen years ago; and of the critique I have nothing to say. Your painting, I believe, is not any worse for the risk to which it has been exposed in passing through so many unknown hands; but I verily think that in any court of justice my face in it, or what should have been my face, might recover damages for a libel, for the engraving, — and my real face, insignificant as it is, might recover sevenfold, both for the portrait and the engraving; so cruelly has it been tortured in the first, and so ludicrously caricatured in the last."

This is the finest passage in one of the sublimest chapters in the Bible, for instruction, amplification, and climax; and yet it leaves undefined the condition of the saint at the resurrection, except that we are assured he will have a '*spiritual body*,' but what that is we know not: that all men will rise from the dead, the spirit clothed in some vehicle different from their present humanity, is one of the plainest and most glorious doctrines of divine revelation." Mr. Atmore asked the poet what he thought of the line "Man is immortal till his work is done." *Montgomery:* "It is a bold expression, and may be used with propriety; for, doubtless, if God has any particular service for any of his creatures to perform, he will preserve them by his providence, till it is done. I do not know with whom the sentiment originated."

Early in 1824, a number of gentlemen in the town and neighbourhood of Sheffield united with several intelligent individuals of the working classes to form a library for the use of mechanics and their apprentices. From the earliest movement on the subject, in the previous year, Montgomery had lent the influence of his pen and his paper to its furtherance— though not without some *ungentle* admonitions from certain quarters as to the peril of adding to gratuitous instruction in the art of reading, a cheap, if not free access, to a collection of works in general literature. He could not be persuaded to withhold the certain advantage, through fear of the possible abuse, of useful knowledge —constantly arguing that, however "a little learning" might be "a dangerous thing" in some cases, it was the privilege, if not the duty, of every individual honestly to get as much of it as he could. And when, in the practical carrying out of the scheme, his name was likely to be of service, he did not for a moment

hesitate to accept the office of president, nor to furnish, in connection with Mr. Everett, some information in reply to an inquiry addressed to him by Mr. (afterwards Lord) Brougham.* Montgomery was from the first well aware of the discordant elements ready to be mixed up with the management of this institution; and for many years ensuing—indeed, nearly to the end of his life—he was harassed by attempts annually made to alter the constitution and subvert the design of the library.†

Montgomery, being apprehensive that he might not be able to attend the first meeting for business, addressed the following letter to his colleagues:—

James Montgomery to the Members of the Committee of the Sheffield Mechanics' Library.

"'Iris' Office, Feb. 15. 1825.

"GENTLEMEN,

"I am very unwell to-day, and yet I am obliged to go out of town. I have stipulated to return to the meeting this evening, which I shall certainly attend, unless my cold be so much worse as to prevent me. Lest this should be the case, I take the earliest opportunity of congratulating you on your appointment, and myself on being associated with you. Nothing could be more fair, open, and independent than the election of the committee on Monday se'nnight: we are therefore bound to discharge our duty the

* With reference to his pamphlet, entitled, "Practical Observations upon Education," &c., in which he speaks of the Sheffield Mechanics' Library as "opened under the able and zealous superintendence of Mr. Montgomery, a name well known in the literary world, and held in deserved honour by philanthropists."

† A party being anxious to obtain an anti-religious committee, and to get rid of a fundamental rule which prohibits the introduction of novels and romances.

more diligently and conscientiously, and to consult not only our own opinions in the choice of books, as far as preference goes, according to our particular tastes, but to endeavour to obtain such a variety of useful and approved works in art, science, literature, and even amusement, as shall gratify the different wishes of our constituents, as well as meet their wants for furnishing their minds with the means of improvement and delight. I hope we shall begin our labours for the ensuing year with this full determination; and, that it may be carried into the completest effect, let us resolve to attend the committee meeting duly, unless prevented by sickness, absence, or indispensable business. The more punctually we appear round the same table, and engage in the same interesting employment, the more, I am persuaded, we shall like one another, and like our duty, because we shall better understand both. Let us exercise as much patience with each other as we would desire others to exercise towards ourselves. By being mutually kind and courteous we shall find the evenings pass pleasantly and profitably, for we cannot be pleasantly engaged in a good work without being proportionately profited in it. Our constituents will reap the advantage of our harmony and faithfulness in fulfilling the trust which they have reposed in us, and the town itself be benefited by the result of our humble but honourable exertions to promote the intellectual and moral improvement of the most numerous and important class of its inhabitants. I confess that I went to the annual meeting under considerable discouragement. I thought that our honorary members did not give us that measure of countenance and support which an institution so excellent and so influential deserved. I was glad, however, to see the faces of some of the most respectable of these on the occasion; and I was both gratified and affected to see so many of the proprietors present and so interested in the business of the evening. I can honestly say, that I acted as impartially as I could, according to the utmost of my knowledge; and, notwithstanding the discussion became occasionally warm, I was exceedingly gratified on the whole,

and came home in much better spirits than I went. Accept the assurance of my sincere respect; and, so far as I can serve the institution, you may always command the services of

"Your friend,

"JAMES MONTGOMERY."

An ingenious experiment was made on Montgomery's critical sagacity by the Peasant Poet of Northamptonshire.

John Clare to James Montgomery.

"Helpstone, Jan. 5. 1825.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I copied the following verses from a MS. on the fly-leaves of an old book entitled 'The World's best Wealth, a Collection of choice Counsils in Verse and Prose, printed for A. Bettesworth, at the Red Lion in Paternoster Row, 1720:' they seem to have been written after the perusal of the book, and are in the manner of the company in which I found [them]. I think they are as good as many old poems that have been preserved with more care; and, under that feeling, I was tempted to send them, thinking they might find a corner from oblivion in your entertaining literary paper the 'Iris:' but if my judgment has misled me to overrate their merit, you will excuse the freedom I have taken, and the trouble I have given you in the perusal: for after all, it is but an erring opinion, that may have little else than the love of poesy to recommend it.

"I am yours sincerely,

"JOHN CLARE.

"James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

"'*The Vanitys of Life.*

"Vanity of vanitys—all is vanity!"—SOLOMON.

I.

"'What are life's joys and gains?
What pleasures crowd its ways,
That man shou'd take such pains
To seek them all his days?

Sift this untoward strife
On which thy mind is bent;
See if this chaff of life
Is worth the trouble spent,'" &c.

There were nineteen stanzas of this sort; and so adroitly was the style of a certain class of writers of the age and taste of "Quarles and Withers" imitated, that we do not wonder the author succeeded, in some degree, in producing the mystification he intended; but Montgomery doubted, and was cautious. "The following verses," said he, when publishing them, "were sent to the editor of the 'Iris' by Mr. John Clare, the Northamptonshire poet, who, by the buoyancy of native genius, has raised himself to an eminence which few of his distinguished contemporaries could have reached, had they been originally placed in circumstances as unfavourable to the development of their talents as he was. The history of the present piece shall be given in his own words; but we may observe that, long as the poem appears to the eye, it will abundantly repay the labour of perusal, being full of condensed and admirable thought, as well as diversified with exuberant imagery, and embellished *occasionally* with peculiar felicity of language: the moral points in the closing couplets of the stanzas are often powerfully enforced."*

One of the earliest recollections of the Peasant Poet was the reading of Montgomery's "Common Lot," which he had met with, printed as a halfpenny song, on a slip with Wordsworth's "We are Seven." And we may mention that Clare's first active and judicious friend and neighbour, who sought him out in poverty and arranged for the publication of his poems in

* Iris, Feb. 15. 1825.

London,—Mr. Drury, bookseller at Stamford,—wrote to Montgomery (Aug. 24. 1820), stating that the young man's friends were anxious to afford him the means of improving his defective education, adding, "Some one has recommended Fulneck School so strongly, that I am anxious to learn a few particulars respecting that establishment, which appears to possess every desideratum, providing it is not too much of a La Trappe; for the young man is rather gloomy, and needs cheerful society."* What answer was returned to this inquiry we do not know; but we may presume Montgomery would be little disposed to bring upon the Brethren the onerous responsibility of directing the studies of a rustic youth of genius like Clare, and under such peculiar circumstances, especially when he recollected how often the religious establishment at Fulneck had been charged—however inconsiderately—with mistaking and endangering his own character in early life.

Mr. Everett, having received a letter from the Rev. Theophilus Lessey, inviting him to attend a Methodist Missionary Meeting at Halifax, called upon Montgomery, and inquired about his health. "I am very unwell," said he, "and no better for the sight of that letter in your hand—I see whose it is: I have got one from the same person, but I won't answer it now;—call again in the afternoon. I am like a public wheelbarrow,—not only a servant of all-work, but a servant of everybody: if I go to Halifax, it will be like walking into a fever; and go or not, I shall have no rest till the meeting is over." In the afternoon he called upon Mr. Everett with the following letter:—

* Some one, when shown Clare's portrait, said, "that man will go mad,"—a prediction too sadly verified by the result.

James Montgomery to the Rev. T. Lessey.

"Sheffield, March 5. 1825.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"Your letter, this morning, has troubled me exceedingly. It is giving much more importance than you ought to any supposed assistance that I might lend to the best cause under heaven, and therefore the strongest on earth, thus to press me after the frank and candid denial which I was compelled to return to the first invitation. I might easily have pleaded ambiguous excuses, which you could not have controverted, and which would have precluded the renewal of any negotiation on the subject; but I disdained to employ guile of any kind, and rather betrayed to you a secret of my own bosom, in the hope that compassion to my infirmity would have restrained you from further solicitation to one so little prepared to make the sacrifice which you require. In this dilemma, it might seem on my part that I myself ascribed too much importance to my services were I to refuse them any longer, — a fault which I am sure would be far less pardonable in me than in you, though I scarcely know how to forgive you for it. I will therefore say, that I will endeavour to attend your missionary anniversary, if I can contrive to reach Halifax either on Saturday evening previous, or on the Monday in due time. You do not say at what hour the meeting will be held .... I wait your answer at your convenience. Mr. Everett I expect to write under this hasty scrawl.

"I am truly,

"Your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P. S. — If my name is to be announced in any way, do *not* let the foolish letters *Esq.* be attached to it.

"To the Rev. Theo. Lessey."

On the Monday following the date of this letter, Montgomery set out for Halifax in company with

Mr. Everett, from whose memoranda the following extract is taken:—

"I felt glad that we had the inside of the coach to ourselves, as I was anxious to obtain from him some information relative to a MS. volume of verse which he had given me, dated 1719. He said he did not recollect how he came by it, but supposed he purchased it with a lot of old books, originally from the library of Dr. Pegge, the antiquary of Whittington, who perhaps was the collector of the matter, as the last page bore 'Finis. S. Pegge, St. John's.' The pieces are more remarkable for cleverness than purity, one of them being, in the poet's opinion, an unpublished composition of Prior's.

"On passing Chapeltown, he adverted to an agreeable visit we once paid to Mr. G. Newton, of Staindrop Lodge, 'who,' said he, 'is a very valuable man, whose life shows what good may be effected by one who is equally attentive to the concerns of religion, and to his duties in the commercial world: his influence will be felt for generations to come.' On coming to an entrance to the coal mine excavated in the hill side, and partially covered with trees, 'That cavern,' said I, 'leads, by an easy slope, from the surface of the ground to the deep coal works, without the necessity for the workmen to descend a vertical shaft.' *Montgomery:* 'Aye,—*facilis descensus averni,*—but it leads to the pit, like Bunyan's bye-way to hell.' This remark led us to the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' *Montgomery:* 'There is no mode of instruction more tedious than allegory, in general; but the Progress of John Bunyan's Pilgrim is an exception: it is so full of genius, a fiction so truth-like, that instead of being tired with it, it is, as Dr. Johnson says, one of the few things of the kind which you would fain were longer.' On reaching Wakefield, where we had to take a chaise for Halifax, he rather objected to the road I proposed, as not being the shortest; he was right; but I had my reasons for preferring that along which he had passed, so many years before, a runaway from Mirfield: he caught my cue, and not unwillingly conversed about 'Departed Days.' At the

meeting he spoke with extraordinary animation and fervour; and as the subject led him to Tobago, he had nearly broken down under the emotion excited by an allusion to the missionary labours and sufferings of both his parents in that island, 'where,' said he, 'they made the first deep furrows with the gospel-plough, and fell down dead in them through excess of labour; and now the seed of eternal life, once cast into them, had sprung up in an abundant harvest, under better auspices. And oh!' he exclaimed, with an emphasis which drew tears from many eyes, 'in the great harvest-day at the end of time, when those who have died in the Lord in Tobago shall arise and stand before the judgment seat, my mother, *my dear mother*, will stand in the midst of them, to receive her reward!' With much difficulty Mr. Lessey persuaded him to remain a day or two in Halifax after I was gone. On his return home he called upon me, and said he had enjoyed the visit. 'I was,' said he, 'very much pleased with Mr. Newstead [a missionary from Ceylon], and with good old Mr. Suter*; as for Mr. Lessey, with his noble intellect, he has such ardour of feeling, that the excitement of his conversation would kill me in a week.'" †

---

* A Methodist preacher, brother to the celebrated comedian, Ned Shuter,—as he spelled the name to avoid suspicion of relationship!

† This good man died June 10. 1841; when Montgomery dropped a poetical flower upon his grave:—

"Theophilus! that name how dear
To mortal or immortal ear!
Lover of God! beloved by Him!
Which of the brightest seraphim
Would not in heaven rejoice to claim
The glory of so high a name?
That name on earth belonged to thee,—
Now bear it through eternity,
Where, if as we who mourn thee trust,
Thou, with the spirits of the just,
Art resting on God's holy hill.
What worthy theme below is still
The burthen of thy song above?—
'Love is of God; for God is Love!'"

On descending from the platform at the above-mentioned meeting, he was affected by the salutation of an old schoolfellow, who having been brought—like himself—while in petticoats, and the child of a missionary, to Fulneck, had—also like him—strayed from the Brethren's fold. While breakfasting next morning with a large party, West's picture of "Death on the Pale Horse" was mentioned; Montgomery replied, "It is, indeed, an extraordinary production; but as a general rule, there is nothing so cheap as *horror*, either in painting or poetry; and heathenism, as Mr. Newstead best knows, owes much of its influence to the predominance of this attribute in its hideous idols and abominable practices." A lusty gentleman of the party spoke of himself as "a reed shaken with the wind." "He must surely," said Montgomery aside, "mean a *bamboo!*" Though singularly loth to pay voluntary visits, he would call upon the Rev. Titus Knight, the venerable vicar of Halifax, and the father of Mr. Cotterill's clerical successor at St. Paul's Church, Sheffield.

April 3. According to his practice of late years, he attended the Quarterly Meeting of Teachers belonging to Red Hill Sunday School. Although evidently very feeble and unwell, he spoke at considerable length on the duties, discouragements, and rewards of the teachers. We were struck with his comparison of the manner in which irreligious parents too often obliterate, during six days of the week, whatever good impressions may have been made on their children's minds on the Sabbath, with the practice of some of the old monkish caligraphers, who defaced the precious manuscripts of sacred or classical knowledge with their foolish or fanciful legends. The remark having been made that several ministers, including the Revs. William Harvard,

Dr. Marshman, and Peter Haslam, had been Sunday scholars, Montgomery said he knew and honoured them, respectively, for their works' sake. He had read Mr. Harvard's work on the "Introduction of Christianity into Ceylon," with deep interest. Dr. Marshman had recently been instrumental in giving the Bible to the Chinese in their own language, and thus rendering the Word of God accessible to two hundred and fifty millions of mankind—a prodigious achievement! "Had this illustrious oriental scholar," exclaimed the speaker, with emphasis, "translated any other book of equal magnitude *into* or *out of* the language of the celestial empire, he would have been lauded—even if he had not been crowned with laurel—by all the universities of Europe; but as it was only the Bible—the Book of God—the record of man's salvation—which he had published, he was neglected by the learned, and forgotten by the great; but he will have his reward, both in this world and in that which is to come; for millions yet unborn will bless his memory and revere his name." He said he well remembered Peter Haslam, though he had been dead several years. "One Sunday afternoon he preached in Carver Street Chapel: there were few persons present besides myself and some servant girls. What were the divisions or the style of his sermon, I do not recollect; but the text—'Oh save me for thy mercies' sake' (Psal. vi. 4.)—was so powerfully impressed upon my mind that it has never since ceased to influence me: hundreds and thousands of times have I repeated it in meditation and in prayer; and I feel at this moment that, if I am saved at last, it must be through the free, unmerited mercy of God, exercised towards me, for the Saviour's sake."* Mr. Holland, who was present, not only per-

* How deep an impression these words made upon the poet's

ceived the feebleness but was alarmed for the safety of his friend; and calling upon him the next morning, he found him suffering from incipient quinsy, of which he said he felt the first symptom by a sort of "prick in the throat" while speaking the day before.

April 17. We had both seen him in his sufferings, during the conflict between a blister and the quinsy, and this being Sunday, Mr. Everett called and sat awhile with him. *Everett:* "There is a great deal implied in that admonitory passage, 'Let patience have her perfect work.'" *Montgomery:* "We have, indeed, great need of patience with ourselves, with our fellow-creatures, and even with God Himself, when He finds it necessary to chastise us: for," added he, with overflowing eyes and faltering voice, "if God had not exercised more patience towards us, than we have manifested towards one another, or towards Himself, our salvation would have been impossible: but He is merciful to us amidst our rebellion and indifference." *Everett:* "Nothing can more strikingly illustrate the goodness of our heavenly Father, than the fact that He makes despair of his mercy one of the greatest sins of which we can be guilty." *Montgomery:* "If ever I am saved — of which I entertain a humble hope — it will be entirely through the free, unmerited grace of a Redeemer: but the last and greatest conflict is yet to come with the time when I must quit this life, and go into the pre-

heart may also be inferred from his hymn, of which they are the theme. It was composed under the colonnade at Leamington, Oct. 30. 1819, "in the midst of much desolation of soul, and is a just picture of the author's feelings at the time."

"Mercy alone will meet my case;
For mercy, Lord, I cry:
Jesus, Redeemer! show thy face
In mercy, or I die," &c. — *Orig. Hymns.*

sence of my Maker, to render an account of my doings. There is something awful in that petition in the Prayer-Book — 'O Lord, suffer me not at my last hour for any pains of death to fall from Thee.' I feel that I am breaking up both in body and mind; and yet, though I know that eternal happiness or everlasting misery awaits me, I do not act with corresponding earnestness in matters pertaining to my own salvation. I appear to be busy for everybody, and about everything, except the 'one thing needful.' I am not indeed neglectful of personal religion, but I am too often slothful in what ought to be the great business of my life." These self-abasing confessions were, of course, met by Mr. Everett with such sentiments of counsel and consolation as appeared suitable: and although our beloved friend did seem and believe himself likely to leave the world before his long-suffering brother, he was happily restored to live and be useful for many years longer.

April 28. Mr. Everett, being about to leave Sheffield, called upon the poet, whom he found so much better, that he was not only about to go to Harrogate, but entered into the project of a trip to Italy, which was mentioned; and which, he said, had often been talked about between Mr. Hodgson and himself, without either of them having the courage to urge upon the other the undertaking. The recent marriage of his friend, the Rev. T. Smith, was mentioned. *Montgomery:* "The bride is a grand-daughter of the celebrated sculptor, who executed several of the more famous modern monuments in Westminster Abbey and elsewhere. Roubilliac not only wrote clever French verses, but he exhibited more of poetical genius in his designs than any other statuary of his time. It is said that Bacon, on one occasion, stood long in silent admiration before

one of his figures; and when roused from his reverie, and asked what he thought, replied, 'It has only one fault—it was not executed by me,'—a graceful compliment to himself and his predecessor. Bacon," he took care to add, "was one of the few eminent artists in his line, who have been good men in the evangelical sense."* *Everett:* "Mrs. Nightingale's monument embodies a startling idea, treated with great ingenuity and success." *Montgomery:* "The horrors of death are softened in the skeleton, which is itself rendered less revolting by the loose fold of drapery so artfully thrown over it: and even in the naked skull— unmeaning as it might otherwise seem—there is a determined aim in the empty eye-sockets: the deprecatory attitude and look of the husband are wonderfully expressive." On the day following he went to Harrogate, where he wrote the three sweet heart-feeling stanzas, entitled "Youth Renewed."†

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, May 28. 1825.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your last letters have more delighted and affected us than any received before, as they contain farther and greater proofs not only of the trials and crosses which you are called upon to encounter or endure, but of your faith and patience also, as well as of the blessing which accompanies your labours and your sufferings to yourself and the Gentiles to whom you were sent. We continue to follow you in spirit, with our sympathy, our prayers, and our hopes, along all the way which the Lord hath led you on your missionary pilgrimage; and, seeing how often you have been suddenly involved in danger and most providentially

* See the Memoir of him by the Rev. R. Cecil.

† Works, p. 311.

delivered, we will cherish the belief, which grows stronger and dearer to us every day, that you will yet return to your native land and to your friends in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of peace, and in the possession of those powers to serve your Master and ours at home, which have been exercised and improved during your absence by sea and land among Christians and heathen, in temporal and in spiritual things, beyond whatever you, in the lowliness of your mind, while here, ever anticipated. Alas! I cannot say so much for many of us whom you left behind by our multitude to fill up the large space which you had left vacant; and least of all can I speak creditably of myself and the employment of my one talent; it has not, indeed, been buried in the earth, but it has been turned to little profit. I have not been merely an 'unprofitable servant,' — for I have done less than it was my duty to do in every Christian institution where we were formerly united, and I have done almost nothing in that way which is often the most effectual for the accomplishment of great and good things, and in which you had a peculiar gift, — I mean in stirring up, in keeping up, and building up, others in this part of their most holy faith, — namely, doing good unto all men, by extending the knowledge, the example, the influence, and the practice of the gospel among the young and the old; Christians, so called, at home, and heathen abroad. When you return, you will with sorrow discover how much we have apostatised in many things from what you taught us, and from what we followed diligently and successfully, while you, as our master, — the greatest of all, because the servant of all, like your Redeemer, — were present with us. Oh! how welcome again will be your vigilant eye, your active mind, your generous hand, your fervent spirit! Forgive me for what seems to be praise, but is only the language of gratitude and affection from my heart. I speak thus, because *you* will give God the glory. I cannot recollect any particular local intelligence to send you at this time. I believe most of your old friends who were alive and well when you last heard of them are, through mercy,

still so. *I have* been severely afflicted with quinsey, and a complaint in the head that followed it, but am nearly recovered. . . . . The Rev. Thomas Smith, as you will have no doubt heard, has been married recently to Miss Thomas, sister to Mrs. Conder, wife of the editor of the 'Eclectic Review.' She is an accomplished lady, I understand,—for I was from home when they became the happiest couple on the face of the earth, and had not the opportunity of seeing them in their paradisiacal state: that, however, is not past, even in this world, I hope, although the honeymoon is gone by. My friends here, the Misses Gales, are pretty well; we often talk of you at our fireside, always with affectionate hearts, and sometimes with tearful eyes. They send their kindest regards, and benedictions, and prayers for your health, and happiness, and return. I have scarcely anything new to send you in print, except a copy of 'Cowper's Poems,' to which the prefatory essay is my composition. Of this I beg your acceptance, as another small token of my gratitude and esteem for many invaluable acts of kindness shown to me while you lived here, and for every one of which I am happy to remain your debtor till death. And now, though I have said little, considering that I am writing to you at the ends of the earth, nothing remains for me to add, but that it is my heart's desire and prayer for you, that He who has preserved you in six troubles will not suffer you to fall in the seventh, — or if He does, it will be to take you to Himself, and save you from *all* troubles, and that for ever. In his presence on earth may we yet meet to praise Him! — and in his presence in heaven may we be found when time, and life, and death are passed away!

"I am, faithfully and affectionately,
"Your friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., of Sheffield, England,
at Calcutta, or elsewhere."

The following letter will explain itself:—

James Montgomery to Dr. Williamson.

"Sheffield, May 31. 1825.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am really so low in spirit, as well as feeble in body, that I cannot sum up courage to accept the obliging invitation of your literary and philosophical friends to attend the anniversary dinner of their institution, nor to avail myself at the same time of your hospitality so kindly offered. I assure you that there is only less self-denial in this evasion than there would be (at least, I fear so) in the acceptance of so honourable a challenge, while I lose all the pleasure which would undoubtedly far over-compensate, at the same time, any personal inconvenience that I might suffer. I can only wish that you may all be both merry and wise, — merry you deserve to be, and wise you are bound to be, — and that you all may have cause to remember the festivity for many years to come, if not as a very high intellectual banquet,—for that is not necessary, —yet as a delightful meeting of kindred spirits of no mean order, and united in one good and glorious pursuit of that knowledge which, next to pure religion, exalts man above the world that he inhabits as a sojourner, and, by delivering him from the thraldom of the senses, proves that he has powers which death cannot extinguish, seeing they are manifestly capable of infinite development. But I shall grow rhetorical if I do not stop short here, and you will think I am writing a speech which I might have delivered, more in time and place, on Friday next at your meeting.

"I told you that I had nothing in the shape of verse that would at all suit the occasion, and that the occasion was not likely to inspire so poor a clod as I am with 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' Had Prometheus made men of such clay as mine, not all the fire that *he* could bring from heaven (by his 'philosophical apparatus,' no doubt) would have animated one of them. I am not sure that poetical recitations in convivial parties are well adapted to exhilarate the hearers. Even bad speeches, I should

think, would be better than middling verses, because there is much of personal feeling connected with the former, and sentiments of kindness, sympathy, &c. excited towards the speaker. Words 'warm from the heart and faithful to its fires,' however rude and stammering in delivery, yet commend themselves more immediately to the good will of the hearers than more splendid and elaborate compositions, uttered with studied grace and emphasis. But in this I may be mistaken, as I never heard any poetry recited on such occasions, and, after all, its effect must depend mainly upon the happy fluency with which it may be given; so do not let a word of this impertinence escape from your lips, lest some inspired son of the Muses — son of all the nine, mayhap — should be discouraged from attempting to charm your company with his strains. If he does, the worst I wish him is that they may be the best ever delivered after dinner since dinners and verses were invented.

"I intended to have been very brief, but I have rambled into sad rhapsodies, which you will forgive. With best regards to Mr. and Mrs. Rawson,

"I am, truly,

"Your obliged friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"James Williamson, M. D., Leeds."

As we have previously noticed Montgomery's address at the Red Hill School Meeting in April, and his subsequent, not to say consequent illness, we may mention that he was again present at the ensuing meeting in July. He adverted to the fact that since his last attendance he had been brought very near to the gates of the grave, and therefore into a situation in which a man usually scrutinises his conduct: he had himself done so, and could truly say that in the prospect of death, which he contemplated as both certain and near, and whatever he might have felt in other respects, he had not had one moment's misgiving of soul as to the propriety of the exertion in that room, which

appeared to have been one cause of his suffering. "Nor," added he, with deep solemnity, "had I died at that time, do I believe that in whatever point of created space, or in whatever relation to eternity, my spirit might have been at this moment, should I have had occasion to regret having spent my last strength in, and devoted my latest public breath to, the service of this Institution."*

July 30. N. H. Carter, Esq., an intelligent gentleman of New York, at that time on a tour of pleasure to this country, accompanied by a friend, called upon Montgomery. The following is Mr. Carter's notice of his interview with the Sheffield poet, as

* On this occasion the Rev. G. Manwaring, one of the Wesleyan preachers, presided: at the conclusion of the meeting he remarked, that, after hearing Montgomery's speech, he should go from that place more powerfully impressed with the importance of his duty as a Christian minister, and more fully determined to aim at the conversion of sinners. He little thought how short a time awaited him for the realisation of this promise: — before the next quarterly meeting a fever had carried him to his grave! He died, Sept. 1. 1825; and a few days afterwards Mrs. Jones received the following communication: —

"DEAR MADAM,

"Since I saw you last here, you mentioned that Mrs. Manwaring would be pleased to receive a few lines in reference to her late irreparable loss. I have written the enclosed verses*; they are not either elegy or epitaph, and they might be applied to a thousand other instances of bereavement like hers; but on that account they may be more interesting, if they have any of the truth of nature in them. If you think they would be acceptable to Mrs. Manwaring, pray present them to her, as suggested by her peculiar situation, however general the sentiments may be. I only request that they may not be published.

"I am, truly,
"Your obliged friend,
"JAMES MONTGOMERY."

* "The Widow and the Fatherless."—Works, p. 313.

given in the narrative of his tour, afterwards published in America.*

"Finding ourselves rather unexpectedly in Sheffield, without letters of introduction, and having a strong desire to see the author of the 'Wanderer of Switzerland,' the 'West Indies,' and many other admired poems, I addressed a note to him†, enclosing my card, making known our wishes, and requesting the favour of an interview. It was a novel experiment, partaking more of the spirit of adventure than of either etiquette or politeness. Some slight apology might be found in a kindred profession‡, and in the expectation that the interview might take place at the office of the 'Iris,' of which he was editor.

"In a few minutes a note was returned, saying that the gentleman alluded to would be happy to see us at any time between five and seven o'clock on that evening. At six o'clock, thinking a medium the safest, we called at the number designated in the note, and were shown into a small

---

* "Letters from Europe; comprising the Journal of a Tour through Ireland, England, Scotland, France, Italy, and Switzerland, in the years 1825, '26, and '27. By N. H. Carter." In two volumes. Second edition. New York, published by Carvill, 1829.

† "King's Head Hotel, July 30. 1825.

"Two American gentlemen, from the city of New York, who are making the tour of Europe, find themselves unexpectedly at Sheffield, entire strangers, and without letters of introduction. One of them is the editor of the 'Statesman,' intimately acquainted with the family of Mr. Gales at Washington. They are very desirous to see Mr. Montgomery, with whose writings they have long been familiar, and adopt this mode of soliciting an interview in the course of this day or evening. They are aware that etiquette cannot sanction the request, but hope that circumstances may furnish an apology. Letters from the Governor of New York, and other gentlemen in the United States, will be exhibited, if any credentials are requisite.

"James Montgomery, Esq."

‡ Mr. Carter was editor of a newspaper in New York.

neat sitting room, in which a table was set for tea. In a few minutes the poet made his appearance, and we went through the awkward ceremony of a self-introduction, which his politeness, however, rendered as little embarrassing as possible.

"We soon took seats at the tea table, and his affability, as well as that of the ladies with whom he lives, and who have relations in the circle of my friends in the United States, made us forget that we were strangers, and in some degree removed the restraint of unintentionally throwing ourselves upon his hospitality. The conversation turned upon a great variety of topics, literary, local, and general; and one of the happiest hours of my life passed in the society of a poet with whose works I had long been familiar, and from which I could have repeated to him a hundred favourite passages.

"In his manners, the author manifests all that mildness, amiable simplicity, and kindness of heart, so conspicuous in his writings. His flow of conversation is copious, easy, and perfectly free from affectation. His sentiments and opinions on all subjects of remark were expressed with decision and frankness, but at the same time with a becoming modesty. His language is polished and select, betraying occasionally the elevation of poetry, but exempt from any appearance of pedantry. While the merits of all his cotemporaries were freely discussed, and the meed of discriminating praise liberally awarded to each, not the slightest allusion was made to his own productions, although they are quite as much read in our country as those of any other living poet. It would have been a breach of politeness in me to have told him how many generous sentiments he has instilled, and how many hearts he has made better, beyond the Atlantic.

"I was much amused with a little incident that occurred while we were at tea. A kitten kept purring and mewing about him, and would often leap up into his lap, as if it claimed a familiar acquaintance, and had been accustomed to receive its daily portion at his hands. He seemed slightly annoyed, and endeavoured secretly to silence the

importunities of the little animal for its tea. This scene, trifling as it was, at once suggested to my mind the gentle virtues and domestic habits of the amiable Cowper.

"The poet is now at the age of forty-seven [forty-four]. In his person he is slender and delicate, rather below the common size. His complexion is light, with a Roman nose, high forehead, slightly bald, and a clear eye, not unfrequently downcast, betraying a modest degree of diffidence. The contour of his face is not unlike that of Mr. Lloyd, Senator in Congress from Massachusetts, and there is also a resemblance in their persons. The events in his life are too well known in our country to need repetition. Both his parents died as missionaries in the West Indies, and to that misfortune we are probably indebted for one of his finest poems. He appears to be universally respected and beloved in the place of his residence. But I have, perhaps, already said more than the delicacy of such a subject can justify, and will therefore only add, that at eight o'clock he very cordially took our hands and wished us a pleasant tour."*

Montgomery was unaware of the existence of this delicate and graceful notice of an interview which was an agreeable one on both sides, until the year 1836, when the writer of the present paragraph pointed it out to him.

Robert Southey was by no means the only distinguished individual in whose liking for cats Montgomery sympathised; for while the "Cats' Eden" of the Mount bore no comparison to the "Cattery" at Greta Hall in the number of its feline favourites, those which it did contain were neither less prized nor less petted: indeed, we never recollect the time when some familiar "Tabby" or audacious "Tom" did not claim to share the poet's attention during our familiar interviews with him

* Letters from Europe, &c., vol. i. 2nd edit. p. 109.

in his own parlour. We well recollect one fine brindled fellow, called "Nero," who, during his kittenhood, "purred" the following epistle to a little girl who had been his playmate:—

"Hartshead, near the Hole-in-the-Wall, July 23. 1825.

"HARRRRRR,

"*Mew, wew, auw, mauw, hee, wee, miaw, waw, wurr, whirr, ghurr, wew, mew, whew, issssss, tz, tz, tz, purrurrurrurr,*" *&c.*

Done into English:—

"HARRIET,

"This comes to tell you that I am very well, and I hope you are so too. I am growing a great cat; pray how do you come on? I wish you were here to carry me about as you used to do, and I would scratch you to some purpose, for I can do this much better than I could while you were here. I have not run away yet, but I believe I shall soon, for I find my feet are too many for my head, and often carry me into mischief. Love to Sheffelina, though I was always fit to pull her cap when I saw you petting her. My cross old mother sends her love to you — she shows me very little now-a-days, I assure you, so I do not care what she does with the rest. She has brought me a mouse or two, and I caught one myself last night, but it was in my dream, and I awoke as hungry as a hunter, and fell to biting at my tail, which I believe I should have eaten up, but it would not let me catch it. So no more at present from

"TINY.

"P. S. They call me Tiny yet, you see; but I intend to take the name of Nero, after the lion-fight at Warwick next week, if the lion conquers, not else.

"2nd P. S. I forgot to tell you that I can beg, but I like better to steal, — it's more natural, you know.

"Harriet, at Ockbrook."

It may perhaps seem like an anticlimax to this playful epistle, if we remark, that notwithstanding the sportive allusion to the "lion-fight," Montgomery earnestly reprobated that brutalising exhibition, in which the beasts did less dishonour to their nature than the men who were concerned in it.

CHAP LVIII.

1825.

MONTGOMERY ANXIOUS TO DISPOSE OF THE "IRIS."— MR. BLACKWELL MAKES OVERTURES OF PURCHASE. — NEGOTIATIONS AND CONDITIONS. — TERMS OF SALE PROPOSED AND ACCEPTED.— PUBLIC NOTIFICATION. — LETTER TO MR. EVERETT. — EDITOR'S FAREWELL ADDRESS TO HIS READERS. — CHARACTER OF HIS SUCCESSOR. — LETTER TO MR. HOLLAND. — FROM MR. GRAY OF YORK. — TO MISS PEARSON — POETICAL JEU D'ESPRIT.

THE position of a public journalist, irksome and onerous as it often is at the best, becomes increasingly so to the man who possesses a mental organisation so exquisitely sensitive as that of Montgomery. And while a distinction is commonly recognised between the publisher and editor of a newspaper, —the latter being ostensibly unacknowledged, if not really unknown to the public,—of no such tacit fiction could the proprietor of the "Sheffield Iris" take advantage. The triple responsibility of ownership, authorship, and vendor of the paper, not only presumptively, but avowedly, vested in the *Christian Poet;* and this too at a period when such a title, in both its elements, was becoming less and less in estimation with a large and influential class of liberal politicians at least. Hence, while the decidedly religious, the really spiritual tone of Montgomery's mind allied him in all his deeper and more earnest sympathies and movements

with the clergy and their pious coadjutors in every good work, his old Whig associates in the cause of parliamentary and other reforms were, as we have seen, gradually forsaking him to fraternise with more energetic, unscrupulous, and straightforward expounders of their principles. Harassed, on the one hand, by conscientious scruples on many points where his personal opinions came into collision with, or fell short of, those of his former friends, and witnessing, on the other hand, their desertion of his printing-office;—believing, at the same time, that he should be able to realise, from purely literary sources, at least the means of a livelihood, Montgomery had more than once resolved to drop the "Iris" *instanter*, and sell the printing materials for what they would fetch by auction. He was not, of course, unaware that the very title of the paper —for we can hardly use the term "good will"—had still a marketable value in Sheffield; but he also felt that the sale of the copyright would in some measure implicate him in the personal conduct and public views of his successor. Amidst these cogitations overtures of purchase were made to him from an unexpected quarter.

In 1822 Mr. John Blackwell, who had for some years previously travelled as a Methodist preacher, but whose failing health had compelled him to resign his office as a regular minister of the Gospel, came to reside at Sheffield, of which town he was a native, and where he commenced business, first as a dealer in old books, and then as a printer and stationer. From the first he had entertained the idea of an alliance with Montgomery, to whom, however, he was personally unknown; but he saw no opening for a movement in that direction till the latter end of 1823, when, on accidentally mentioning the subject to Mr. Samuel Roberts,

that gentleman, somewhat to Mr. Blackwell's surprise, avowed the opinion that if Montgomery were to receive an eligible offer, he would at once dispose of his newspaper and printing materials on reasonable terms. Immediately, therefore, Mr. Blackwell wrote, offering either to form a partnership, or to purchase the entire printing concern as it stood, at the option of the proprietor. Montgomery, in reply, said he could never again think of entering into partnership with any person; but that should he finally make up his mind to retire from business, he would give his correspondent the first chance of treating for the property.

In this state the affair remained till about the middle of the present year, when a determination on Mr. Blackwell's part, and a simultaneous proposal to Montgomery from another quarter, reopened the negotiation. Montgomery, aware that the success of the newspaper must be uncertain and the expense considerable, and knowing little either of the business energy or the pecuniary means of his correspondent, told him at once that he could not afford to *give* him the good-will—not that to do so would ruin himself, but it would be unjust to others; and as he could give no opinion of the chances of success, he dare not *advise* the purchase. Mr. Blackwell immediately replied, "I am fully aware that no one can ever take up the 'Iris' after yourself, and conduct it with success *on its present plan.* Your remarks made at our last interview exactly corresponded with the opinion I had previously formed on the subject; but that it might be made to answer, by being enlarged in size and conducted spiritedly *as a newspaper*, is what I fully believe: I consider it, in fact, as a plot of ground which, though it may be no longer beautified with such or so many flowers as it produced while under your care,

might yet be cultivated with advantage." He concluded by submitting three propositions to the effect,—1. That Montgomery should say explicitly whether or not he had any objection to transfer the business to *him*. 2. That if he would state the price and conditions upon which he would transfer the business, no attempt should be made to depreciate such estimate, even to the amount of a shilling: the offer should be at once accepted or declined; both parties keeping the transaction a secret, as they had hitherto done. And 3. That should Mr. Blackwell be the purchaser, he would enter into any agreement, written or otherwise, to absolve Montgomery from any blame should the issue be unfortunate.

James Montgomery to John Blackwell.

"Sheffield, June 20. 1825.

"DEAR SIR,

"After harassing my mind day after day to determine what answer to return to your last note, I cannot make either addition to the terms which I vaguely conceived before as proper to ask, if I parted at all with my concern, nor can I make any deduction from them in justice to myself at present. I would transfer the 'Iris' and the printing business, so far as my utmost interest and recommendation would go to serve you, for a premium of 400*l.*; and that the types, presses, &c. &c. in the office should be taken at a fair valuation, which would be less than 500*l.* more, so that the utmost which the purchaser would hazard would be from 800*l.* to 900*l.* It would probably require 1000*l.* more to be expended in additional printing materials and as a floating capital to carry on a new establishment. It will also be necessary to take into calculation the increased expense of editorship, workmen's wages, &c. in extending the size and letter-press of the newspaper. If no unexpected obstructions occur on either side, I should be willing to give up the business and paper in three

months from this date; or, if we agree otherwise, I would continue it till the end of the present year.

"I fear that you would find it a very heavy and troublesome undertaking; I therefore give no invitation nor encouragement, but state simply the lowest conditions on which I can at present think of sacrificing my interest in it.

"I am, truly,

"Your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

The proposed terms were immediately accepted; and the valuation of the printing materials subsequently made without the intervention of a third person, and in such a way as to increase the mutual esteem of the contracting parties. The poet had before him other and, perhaps, more liberal offers; but he said he would not have sold the "Iris" with the prospect of its becoming the vehicle of sedition and irreligion, for a thousand guineas.

Both parties considered it best to keep the matter to themselves until the time for mentioning it publicly should arrive: the writer of this page was, however, privy to the whole transaction; and could not fail to perceive a coincident depression in Montgomery's spirits, arising, not from any misgiving as to the propriety of the course he had taken, but from the contemplated break-up of an establishment with which his whole life, since manhood, had been identified — the severance of his connection with an organ of constant intercourse with the public, and which, while it had been the source of much pain, had also been the medium both of personal pleasure and general usefulness. On mentioning this to the poet, he assented; adding, in his peculiar manner, "I charge you neither to speak, nor think, nor even dream about the matter, till the public are informed of it."

On the 20th September the "Iris" appeared with the following mysterious intimation:—"☞ The proprietor of the 'Iris' respectfully informs the public that a new arrangement has been made respecting the future publication of this paper, particulars of which are intended to be announced next week."

At this time Montgomery was at Harrogate, whither he had gone,—as his friends naturally enough concluded—to be out of the way, till the edge of curiosity and the keenness of impertinent speculation had become somewhat dulled. Whilst there he wrote the following letter:—

James Montgomery to the Rev. James Everett.

"Harrogate, Sept. 20. 1825.

"My dear Friend,

"You will wonder what has become of me since you saw me last. If you want to know at this moment, you must fly through the air, and settle on the same place, and then proceed about a mile southwest (I believe); and here I am at lodgings near Hattersley's Hotel, and thinking of you and speaking to you, 'as by these presents will appear,' when you are as little thinking of me or speaking to me as I was with regard to you at the time above alluded to. Your letter, after long silence and suspense, explained to me an inscrutable mystery. I well recollected meeting a coach on the Ripon road, from Harrogate, in May last, and that some person or persons on the top seemed to recognise and shout to me; but I could no more distinguish who they were than I should know the man in the moon, if I were to see him anywhere else than in his own little world looking down upon this. I puzzled my poor brains no little to find out who the strangers on the coach could be, and, as I saw or heard no more of them, I concluded that they must be some Sheffield mercantile travellers on their return from Scotland. Your letter, however, was welcome on

more and more important accounts than this, as I learned by it that you were still the same kind friend you have always been to me, with a very warm heart and a very good head, except that the said heart sometimes changes places with it, and, having the ascendancy, sometimes carries you away on strange errands. Your adventure at Leamington amused me greatly*, as I could perfectly comprehend the nature of the interview with the old couple there, and had the scene and the actors in my mind's eye as lively as reality could have made them to imagination. I shall not be sorry, in this instance, if I live to see the accomplishment of your wishes in the acquisition of the precious picture which has excited so many pensive and so many delightful ruminations in my inmost thought in days that are past. You mention my forthcoming Hymn Book — it is forthcoming still, and when it will have done forthcoming I cannot tell; but I do seriously expect it will not be long, as I am only waiting for the last proof sheet, containing the Introduction. You will perceive, I suppose, by the 'Iris' of this day, that I am about to resign both the newspaper and the business connected with it; and you may be surprised, after a conversation which we had together last spring, that I have sold the concern to Mr. Blackwell. This might easily be made quite consistent with all that I said to you then, if we were face to face, to have a similar opportunity of 'a palaver.' The whole story is too long and intricate to be given here. One hint must suffice. I had been under promise to him to let him have the refusal of the purchase, whenever I chose to retire, more than a year and a half ago. There was no treaty going on at the time of the conversation above alluded to, nor did I expect that one would be opened so soon. An application to purchase the newspaper from another quarter in some measure compelled me to part with it now, rather than

* Mr. Everett's letter contained an account of a visit which he had made to Leamington on purpose to look at the picture which suggested Montgomery's stanzas entitled "Incognita."

break off with both parties, and keep it longer in my own hands, with all its burthen of vexations, and the hazard of not finding another so favourable an opportunity when I might want to have a little rest on this side of the grave. . . . .

"Your affectionate friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY."

On Tuesday, September the 27th, appeared the last number of the "Iris" with Montgomery's imprint. This paper contained, what was looked for, and read with no little curiosity, the Farewell Address of the Editor to his Readers. The article was of considerable length, and the greater portion of it was reprinted by Montgomery himself in the general preface to his Poetical Works: such passages as are not given there, or which have not already been made use of in these volumes, may now be noticed. Referring to his principles of action, the editor says —

"From the first moment that I became the director of a public journal, I took my own ground; I have stood upon it through many years of changes, and I rest by it this day, as having afforded me a shelter through the far greater portion of my life, and yet offering me a grave, when I shall no longer have a part in anything done under the sun. And this was my ground, — a plain determination, come wind or sun, come fire or flood, to do what was right. I lay stress on the purpose, not the performance, for this was the polar star to which my compass pointed, though with considerable 'variation of the needle.' . . .

"Of the future I have little foresight, and I desire none with respect to this life, being content that 'shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.'"

After referring to those public prosecutions, editorial perils, and ardent aspirations after poetical notoriety

which we have elsewhere described, he thus winds up his retrospect: —

"At the close of 1805 ended the romance of my public life; the last twenty years have brought their cares and their trials, but these have been of the ordinary kind, — not always the better to bear on that account. On a review of them, I can affirm that I have endeavoured, according to my knowledge and ability, to serve my townspeople and my country, with as little regard to the fear or favour of party-men as personal infirmity would admit. From the beginning I have been no favourite with such characters. By the 'Aristocrats' I was persecuted, and abandoned by the 'Jacobins.' I have found nearly as little grace in the sight of the milder representatives of these two defunct classes in later times; yet, if either have cause to complain, it is that I have occasionally taken part with the other, — a presumptive proof of my impartiality. Whatever charge of indecision may be brought against me by those who *will* only see one side of everything, while I am often puzzled by seeing so many as hardly to be able to make out the shape of the object, — it cannot be denied, that on the most important questions which have exercised the understandings or the sympathies of the people of England, I have never flinched from declaring my own sentiments, at the sacrifice both of popularity and interest. If I have not done all the good which I might, and which I ought, I have rejected many opportunities of doing mischief, — a negative merit, which sometimes costs no small self-denial to the editor of a public journal. While I quit a painful responsibility in laying down my office, I am sensible that I resign the possession of great power and influence in the neighbourhood. These I cannot have exercised through so many years, without having made the character of my townspeople something different from what it would have been at this day had I never come among them. Whether they are better or worse for my existence here, they themselves are the right judges. This I can affirm,

that I have perseveringly 'sought the peace of the city,' wherein I was led as an exile to dwell; and never neglected an occasion (so far as I remember) to promote the social, moral, and intellectual improvement of its inhabitants. Nor in retirement can I forget, that the same duty I still owe them. Either through the channel of this paper, or by personal exertions for the public welfare, I shall be happy to avail myself of any favourable opportunity to show my gratitude for all the hospitality, patience, kindness, and friendship, which I have hitherto experienced from the people of Sheffield."

He thus alludes to his successor: —

"But I should not have left my post with a clear conscience if, in the disposal of the 'Iris,' I had not committed it to a man of integrity and public spirit, who, in his conduct of it, would maintain the same principles which I have endeavoured to make the rule of mine, — to do that which is right, according to the best of his judgment, and especially to uphold, by all his energy of mind and influence, the charitable and Christian institutions of this town, on the prosperity of which so much of the happiness of its inhabitants, rich as well as poor, depends. Such an one, I believe, *Mr. Blackwell*, my successor, to be; and the means of sustaining and exalting the character of this paper, which he can already command, and which he has spared no expense in collecting, will enable him to render the 'Iris' far more entertaining, instructive, and generally acceptable than it has ever been under my direction. The very comprehensive scale on which it will hereafter be printed, I hope will prove the least of its advantages: meanwhile, it is a substantial pledge of liberal enterprise in the new proprietor. I can, therefore, honestly and heartily recommend him to my friends and the public, as worthy of their confidence and patronage. I have one favour to ask of my readers, — and *it is the last*, —that they will give my successor a fair trial; when, I cannot doubt that, for his own sake, they will continue to him their generous support."

The reader will no doubt have been struck with Montgomery's solicitude lest Mr. Blackwell should make a bad or a blind bargain; and even when he wrote the foregoing sentences, he was little aware of the tact, intelligence, and energy of his successor. As a curious illustration of this, it may be mentioned that he actually left 400*l.* (the price of the copyright) in the hands of the purchaser, tacitly resolved that should the paper fail, never to receive the money! This fact he only mentioned a few years before his death, to Mr. Blackwell: and is it not, we may ask, an unprecedented instance of the vendor of such a property as that in question, first harassing himself about the hazards of success on the part of the buyer, an entire stranger to him, and then voluntarily giving and taking against himself the heavy bond above mentioned?

That the day of final publication of the "Iris" on the old premises was one of misery to Montgomery, will be sufficiently apparent from the following note written soon afterwards: —

James Montgomery to John Holland.

"Hartshead (not 'Iris' Office), Oct. 6. 1825.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"Never again believe a word that I say, unless you have a better witness of the truth than my memory. When I came to open the album* this evening, lo, and behold,

---

* In which he had promised to write.—

"May the fair owner of this book,
When days, and months, and years are fled,
On many a dear memorial look
Of living love, and love that's dead;
And find on each unchanging leaf
A charm for care, a joy in grief!

the lines on Friendship *were* written therein! not by the pen of Raphael, the affable archangel, nor by the obliging Queen Mab, but by my own proper hand, and on the very day that I published my last 'Iris!' I then recollected, that in the bewilderment of that day, when both the cat and I were as miserable as we well could be with the noise, and dust, and confusion of breaking up the printing-office, I had sat down at nightfall, just when, by special appointment, I ought to have been elsewhere, but quite forgot the engagement, to while away a few dreary minutes in copying the verses into your friend's album, and relieving my mind from the burthen of one straw's weight out of a whole stack that was bearing me down to the ground. Writing this letter relieves me of another of these innumerable and everlasting straws, which multiply themselves like Hydra-heads as fast as they are cut off. I will not turn over-leaf, lest I should be carried on to the fourth page. He was a wise boy who would not cry A, because, if he did, they would make him cry B.

"Your sincere friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY."

Although Montgomery was well aware of the existence of the vile adage, "No friendship in trade,"—of which his own experience as a newspaper proprietor might be said to furnish an illustration,—his business intercourse rarely failed to ripen into mutual regard, if not into Christian sympathy. The latter result characterised his long correspondence with William Gray, Esq., of the stamp-office at York, whose name was always found in any list of subscribers to those

"Here may her youth's companions meet,
And still be young to good old age;
Here journey in communion sweet,
Heart linked with heart, from page to page;
And when their lives are all well-spent,
This be their Friendship's monument!"

evangelical objects in which the poet was specially concerned. He could not, therefore, write for the last time without a touching allusion to the past and the future: that letter, we regret to say, cannot be found; but the following note in reply to it is too honourable to both parties to be suppressed:—

William Gray to James Montgomery.

"York, Oct. 7. 1825.

"DEAR SIR,

"I snatch a few minutes to send, by your successor, my thanks for your kind valedictory letter.

"I can truly say that our transactions of a business and official description have been to me amongst the most pleasant and satisfactory which have arisen during my long continuance in my present department, and your almost coeval existence as a publisher.

"But I trust we part 'only for a season,' with the hope and persuasion that as *Christian friends* we shall finally meet to 'part no more for ever.' Nor can I conceal the expression of my satisfaction in observing, as I think I have done for some years, the *growth* of Mr. Montgomery in Christian philanthropy and correctness of general sentiment, springing, I am fully persuaded, from a revival of religion in his own soul, and rendering his valuable talents more abundantly valuable in promoting the honour of God and the interests of Christ's kingdom. As such, I shall always consider myself, with cordial regard,

"His hearty friend and well wisher,

"WM. GRAY."

A few months afterwards, Mr. Jonathan Gray wrote to desire that Montgomery would make his house his home, whenever he might visit York; adding,

"As you are now a man of leisure, I would say, that if you have never seen the Minster by candle-light or gas-

light on a Sunday evening, the view of it, under those circumstances, is very imposing, and that the eye of a poet ought not to miss it: the best months are November or December; but whenever you come this way, whether it be winter or summer, I shall, if at home, be happy to see you."

James Montgomery to Miss Pearson.

"Hartshead, Oct. 15. 1825.

"DEAR MADAM,

"After having perused your manuscript, I have not a word of counsel or encouragement to give beyond what I stated when we were conversing about the subject of publishing the poems which it contains. My anticipation of their merit has been confirmed by reading them; but, as I told you then, the hopelessness of successfully issuing works of this kind from the press is nearly altogether irrespective of their merit. Unless by a great name, or some very extraordinary interest attached to them, it is scarcely possible to gain public attention in this age, when really good verse is so common, that you meet it every day, and everywhere, and regard it as little as the flowers by the highway side. No bookseller will buy what he cannot sell; and the expense of making a volume known, merely by name, is not less than the expense of printing it; and when you have incurred both charges, you want other recommendations — special ones, attesting the value of the work — to induce any stranger to purchase it. How difficult it is to obtain these recommendations, — such, I mean, as are of any worth and weight with readers at large, — those only who have been tempted to offer themselves candidates for the honours and emoluments of literature can be aware: they are such as those who have overcome them may tremble to review; and the most meritorious among them must feel (I refer principally to poets) that it is rather an escape than a victory on which they have to congratulate themselves. I cannot alter facts, nor reverse this law of nature, or rather of fate; if I could I would, in your behalf, on this occasion;

but so it is, and I should deceive you and disgrace myself if I held out any other prospect in the event of publishing these effusions of an elegant and ingenuous mind, to which they do honour, but for which it would be great good fortune indeed if they could procure the honour that is due. The only plan that I can imagine at all likely to indemnify the cost of publication, with the probability of something to spare, is to issue proposals for a subscription. Even then, you know, it must depend upon the zeal and diligence with which your friends exert themselves to procure names: if you could calculate upon a list one-third in amount—of numbers—of that which graced your first essay*, then I should advise you to venture, and tell you to be of good courage. Not knowing, however, what might be done by your present connections, I must leave the affair to your own decision, with the assurance that so far as I can help you I will. You may put down my name for four copies, and perhaps I may be able to obtain subscribers for half a dozen more; but I have never been successful in such solicitations hitherto, perhaps from want of confidence in recommending the cases by direct personal attacks upon those who are slow to take a hint. Consult Mr. Rhodes, when he returns, and he will be a better comforter than I am in a distress of this kind, though not one more desirous to meet your wishes.

"I am truly, your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss Pearson, Harvest Lane, Sheffield."

His longest poetical production which we find dated in this year is the narrative entitled the "Adventure of a Star;"† to which we have as a companion-piece in prose, the "Voice of a Star."‡ To the

* Published in 1790, with a list of subscribers for upwards of 800 copies.

† Works, p. 232.

‡ It was written at the request of Samuel Drew, editor of the

same period belongs the lively lines in "An Infant's Album."*

An elderly lady having presented to the poet a silk purse, he acknowledged the gift in the following lines, which will remind the reader of Dr. Johnson's *jeu-d'esprit* on a similar occasion:—

"Thanks for the purse your fingers netted,
My money, not my heart, to hold;
For it were much to be regretted
To find my heart amidst my gold.

"Take of that heart as large a sample
As these few simple lines can hold;
In gifts the heart is all, and ample,
It makes them worth their weight in gold.

"Oct. 18. 1825.'

We do not know either the author or the occasion of the following lines, which we transcribe from Montgomery's autograph:—

"Jours charmans! quand je songe à vos heureux instans,
Je pense remonter le fleuve de mes ans,
Et mon cœur enchanté sur la rive fleurie
Respire encore l'air pur du matin de la vie."

"Delightful days! when I recall your hours,
Methinks I reascend the stream of Time,
Play on its banks, among the dew-bright flowers,
And breathe the morning air of life's sweet prime."

"Imperial Magazine," and is printed in the number of that periodical for March 1825, under the signature of "Aster."

* Works, p. 347., where it is misdated 1828.

CHAP. LIX.

1825.

TESTIMONIAL OF RESPECT TO MONTGOMERY. — LETTER TO DR. WILLIAMSON. — PUBLIC DINNER. — SPEECHES ON THE OCCASION. — LETTER FROM THE REV. T. LESSEY. — BROUGHAM'S LETTER AND MECHANICS' INSTITUTIONS. — LETTER TO J. EVERETT. — PUBLICATION OF THE "CHRISTIAN PSALMIST."

As soon as the transfer of the "Iris" to the new proprietor was completed, the political friends of Montgomery began to consider the expediency of making what might be termed his retirement from public life an occasion for expressing their regard for his talents and his virtues. A public dinner was resolved upon; and as soon as the consent of Montgomery to be present, and of Lord Milton to preside, had been obtained, the 4th of November — the poet's birthday — was fixed upon for the festival. For some time, the prospect of becoming the chief object of attention and eulogy in such an assembly as might be expected, harassed him with anxiety: he presently, however, set himself to prepare for the event; and when the time came, instead of being unduly depressed, as we had feared, he seemed in better health and spirits than usual.

Dr. Williamson, having applied to Montgomery for the use of any essay which he might happen to have by him, as suitable to be read before the Leeds Philosophical Society, — at the same time alluding to the public dinner about to be given to the poet, — received the following letter: —

James Montgomery to Dr. Williamson.

"Sheffield, Nov. 1. 1825.

"DEAR SIR,

"Till this hour I have not been able to say that I could meet your request. Having nothing of my own, I applied to the author of the inclosed essay, which he was willing to lend you, but not in this disfigured form, the same having gone through the hands of two transcribers since it was read to our Society, and been more handled than is seemly. He has been disappointed of procuring the use of one of the clear copies, and only at my earnest solicitation permits this to be forwarded, under the express stipulation that it shall on no account pass out of your hands. I have no doubt that you will be able to read it; and as it is not at all imaginative or rhetorical, you will easily apprehend the sense of every clause as soon as you get hold of the leading words. I am sure that it is well worthy of your attention, and may excite some curious and profitable discussion in your assembly.

"Thank you for your kind notice of Friday next; you seem to have a right feeling of the exquisite felicity, and not less exquisite misery, of my situation. My comfort is, that in every week that I have yet lived there has been a Saturday, and I presume there will be one in this. Friday, therefore, cannot last for ever when it does come. I only wish that its sufferings and enjoyments may bear the reflections of Saturday.

"I am truly your friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY."

Nov. 4. The dinner took place at the Tontine Inn, in Sheffield: one hundred and sixteen gentlemen, including all classes of politicians, sat down to the table. On the right of the President, Lord Milton, were Mr. Montgomery and the Rev. Dr. Milner, rector of Thribergh; and on the left, Hugh Parker,

Esq., the senior magistrate of the district, and Robert Chaloner, Esq., M.P. for the city of York. The Vice-Presidents were Henry Moorhouse, Esq., master cutler, and Peter Brownell, Esq., Town-Regent. After the usual loyal toasts had been given, the noble Chairman rose and said: —

"I wish to call your attention to the object of our meeting, and the cause of the presence of our distinguished guest. But, in the first place, I beg to be allowed to speak a few words for myself, to explain how I came, unexpectedly, to preside on the present occasion. Had I been called by you to render my services towards the completion of any plan for the extension of the commerce of this town, or had my friend [we understood his lordship to refer to B. Sayle, Esq.] at that end of the table requested me to meet to express our sentiments on some great political question, I confess I should not have been surprised. If I had been called to celebrate some great victory, or the achievements of some undaunted hero, I should have been afraid, lest in honouring the hero I might have been understood to countenance bloodshed, and those wars in which he had distinguished himself. If it had been an occasion in which the interest of commerce was concerned, I might have been suspected of acting from self-interested motives. But selected as I am to preside at the commemoration of the virtues and meritorious exertions of the individual whom we have invited to meet us this day, I can suspect myself of no improper motives. Our purpose here is to do honour to the individual, who, in his whole course of life, ever made it an object to promote peace. To whatever part of his character I turn, I find everything to admire, and nothing to find fault with. Many years ago, it might have been objected against our friend, that he had been rendered answerable to the laws for certain alleged offences; but these imputed offences are forgotten, and he has proved by his subsequent life that the impugners of his principles were mistaken. It is not my intention to dwell on a topic which may be pain-

ful to Mr. Montgomery; I will rather direct your attention to his constant endeavours to promote the comfort and morals of society. There is not an institution of a benevolent character in Sheffield to which he has not contributed; not merely in the way in which we have all contributed, by rendering pecuniary assistance, but by his time and talents, which I account a greater offering. Indeed, I have had recent proofs of the lively interest which he takes in the great School Establishments in this town. This must be considered as an important service; for wherever knowledge is imparted, the morals must be improved. And religious instruction is most valuable, for we ought to know the duties and principles of the religion we profess. Whatever tends to the advancement of virtue, morality, and religion, in reality best assists the cause of intellect and civilisation. If we do not know the value of religion, we cannot by any means administer to the benefit and comfort of mankind. I will now call your attention to the literary attainments of our guest. Respecting his political principles it is not my intention to speak. Not that I fear the discussion of political principles on proper occasions. My sentiments on the principal political subjects are well known; and I have the satisfaction of saying (not erroneously, I believe) that the political sentiments of this gentleman are the same as my own. I have long known Mr. Montgomery, though it has been my misfortune not to have such frequent personal interviews with him as I could have wished; and give me leave to assert, that his opinions are the necessary result of his course of life, and the operation of his principles. I have learned (and he will not be at a loss to know where I learnt it) that the inflexible love of liberty grows from a benevolent mind. He will recollect the monument which was raised to commemorate the virtues of that individual to whom my family has succeeded in this county; when I could scarcely read, I learned it was not erected for his political character, but because he was beneficent and humane. There are in this room gentlemen of every species of political sentiment of the present day; and I give them

credit for their sentiments being founded on honest principles. But I feel satisfied that here no party feeling exists. I will now notice our friend as an individual. The town of Sheffield has been exalted by his literary attainments. A glory has been shed around his poetical talents, and there could not be a more appropriate time for entwining the laurel than the present. The day which you have chosen for this festival is, I understand (though I did not know this at first), the day which gave him to the world. He was born, indeed, in a distant country; but we (I may speak in the first person) have made him our own, and long may he live to behold around him the good he has effected, standing as a *monumentum ære perennius!* From his fellow-townsmen he has received an honourable mark of distinction, from all ranks in life; and, I trust, the kind recollection of his public services will exist when he has passed into private life. I therefore call upon you to drink the health of—

"Mr. Montgomery—with cheers."

Mr. Montgomery spoke nearly as follows:—

"My Lord Milton, and Gentlemen,—I do not know that I ever stood in a more difficult situation than that in which I find myself at this moment. I have often encountered opposition, and, if I have seldom triumphed, I have never been so vanquished by hostility, but that I have risen above it in the end. Against friendship, however, I cannot hold out; the force of kindness is too much for me; I yield, and cast myself upon your indulgence, confident that *this* will not fail me, though both thoughts and language may, in attempting to address you, under my present embarrassment.

"I recollect that I once went into Derbyshire, in company with a friend, and a niece of mine,—a young person, born and brought up on the banks of the Thames, accustomed to the gay, populous, cultivated scenery of Kent and Middlesex, who scarcely ever had seen a common less frequented than Blackheath, or an eminence more rugged than Shooter's Hill. She was sufficiently lively and fluent of tongue till we had

got upon the high moors; then she grew gradually serious, and at length silent even to sadness. The magnificence of nature in a new form overawed her; the loneliness of the moorlands made thought retire inward; the weight of the mountains seemed to lie upon her spirit, and the depth of the valleys, as we approached Hathersage, to absorb all consciousness, except that of their own dreadful, but delightful presence. Wonder, admiration, and transport, were sublimed by terror. Some time afterwards, talking of that morning's excursion, I said to her, 'Betsy, what did you think of the Peak mountains, when we were among them?' 'Oh!' she replied, with great simplicity, 'I wanted to be quite still; I wished that nobody would speak to me.' A measure of this deep, undefinable feeling has possessed me in the anticipation of this day, and amidst the festivity of this scene; I could have wished, had it been possible, that I might have been silent, and even invisible among you, a spectator of your meeting, and a hearer of the kind things that might be said concerning me. But of what was I afraid? Of your faces? No; for I never in my life saw so many avowedly friendly ones smiling upon me at once. Was I afraid of the good cheer with which you have entertained me? No; for to the limits of temperance, where I suppose enjoyment ends, I, too, can enjoy the luxury and exhilaration of a well-spread board, surrounded with good company, when I have nothing else to do *but* to enjoy them. It was the mighty, the awful, the overpowering sentiment of which I have been the object this day,—as one whom my townspeople and neighbours delight to honour,—not here only, but in various other convivial parties, representing all classes of the population of this district, who have made the anniversary of my birth a day of rejoicing,—it was this sentiment of collective esteem and good-will, so universally embodied (if I may use the phrase), that I trembled to meet in person anywhere, but more especially the peculiar and distinguished expression of it by the company of gentlemen here assembled, differing, as they may do, on many important questions from myself, and from one

another, yet cordially uniting to honour me. But 'England expects *every* man to do his duty,' at a feast as well as at a fray; and though, from constitutional timidity, I would fain have shrunk, like the owl, from this light, now that I am brought into the full blaze, I will not affect to blink the glory reflected upon me, but meet it as the eagle the sun.

"I have heard of proud days for Old England, when her fleets and armies have triumphed over those of her enemies; I have heard of proud days for heroes, when they returned victorious to their native land, with the spoils of nations in their train; I have heard of proud days for kings, when they have been invested with the purple, amidst the acclamations of thousands, and with the blessings of millions upon their heads; I have heard of proud days even for poets, when, in the ancient capital of the world, they have been crowned with a chaplet of bays by the hands of princes: and some of my friends may very naturally think that this is a proud day for me. If pride were the proper feeling for me to entertain at this time, I would open my whole soul to its influences; but I have learnt another lesson, and I must, at least, endeavour to practise it. There is a splendid Italian sonnet*, by Giovambattista Zappi, on Judith returning to Bethulia, with the head of Holofernes in one hand, and the sword which had smitten it off in the other. The populace hailed her at the gates, through the streets, and from the roofs, as the deliverer of her native city; the maidens pressed around to kiss her garment, 'but not her hand;' while a hundred of the sons of the prophets went before, proclaiming her achievement, and foretelling her glory, 'from the sun's rising to his rest.' The poet adds—

"'Stavasi tutta umile in tanta gloria.'

There is an untranslatable idiom in the original, which gives exquisite point to the idea; but the simple meaning may suffice us—

"'She was *humble* under all that glory.'

* Translated by Montgomery, Works, p. 364.

And this is the frame of mind which becomes me on the present occasion. Since I came to this town I have stood through many a fierce and bitter storm, and I wrapt the mantle of pride tighter and tighter about my bosom, the heavier and harder the blast beat upon me; nay, when I was prostrate in the dust, without strength to rise, or a friend powerful enough to raise me, I still clung to my pride, or, rather, my pride clung to me, like the venomed robe of Hercules, not to be torn away but at the expense of life itself. However haughtily I may have carried myself in later trials or conflicts, the warmth and sunshine of this evening, within these walls, compel me irresistibly, because willingly, to cast off every encumbrance, to lay my pride at your feet, and stand before you modestly, yet uprightly, in the garment of humility. But the humility which I now assume is as remote as possible from baseness and servility; nay, it is allied to whatever is noble and excellent — it is the offspring of gratitude; gratitude for all the favour shown to me this day by friends, fellow-townsmen, and neighbours. Let cold-blooded philosophers say what they will, gratitude is not only a genuine, but it is a generous virtue, at once the most humbling and the most exalting of our moral affections: it is the most humbling, inasmuch as it makes its subject forget himself in devotedness and veneration to his benefactor; and the most exalting, inasmuch as it awakens within him all that is best in feeling and holy in principle, to deserve what has been freely conferred upon him. Gratitude and benevolence, in fact, are the counterparts of each other; gratitude is the reflection of benevolence, 'as face answers to face in water;' they are the two poles of the same magnetic needle, vibrating on a common centre of magnanimous disinterestedness; and, like positive and negative electricity, they may be converted into each other according to the preponderating influence. The deaf and dumb boy being required to define 'gratitude,' wrote down on his slate, 'gratitude is the remembrance of the heart:'— may *my* heart never lose its memory! then among the brightest and most cherished of its remembrances, will be

the tokens of esteem and respect which have been bestowed upon me this day, and over which I am rejoicing in this place. These, let me say plainly, are honourable to yourselves, otherwise they would not be honourable to me; and I state this in the real spirit of that humility which I have avouched, and which will not be mistaken for vain-gloriousness, when I have explained myself. They are honourable to *you*, because they represent the homage which you are glad to render to 'virtue and talents' (I take the words of your own requisition for holding this festival) wherever you find them; and they are honourable to *me*, because you have been pleased to attribute to my large professions and small performances more of worth and efficiency than I dare to appropriate for myself, but which I thankfully submit to receive from your bounty.

"With politics I do not mean to trouble you here; I have already made my last speech and confession on these topics, as editor of the 'Iris.' Respecting that farewell, I know not that I have anything to add, to explain, or to retract. I give credit to every gentleman present for as much honesty in the choice of his opinions, and as much independence in the assertion of them, as I have always claimed for myself; I only ask what, indeed, the presence of so many reputable persons, of dissimilar persuasions, at this social board, assures me that I have,—I only ask to be judged by others as I myself desire to judge them. I may be allowed to observe, that if there be a day in the three hundred and sixty-five which compose the year,—and surely out of three hundred and sixty-five there must be one day, at least,—on which the civil war of party should be suspended, and a truce, nay, a jubilee of all true patriots held, it is the fourth of November, on which are commemorated, not the event only, but the principles of the revolution of 1688. From these principles we all profess to derive our peculiarities: before we take a step, then, we are all standing on common ground; and, to be *consistent*, we must be *concordant* to-day.

"But the terms of the requisition for this meeting war-

rant, if they do not require, that I should allude to a character in which I have won more glory, and not suffered less severely, than I have done in politics."

The speaker then went into some details relative to his early life, as well before as after his residence in Sheffield; alluding also to his varied labours and ultimate success as a poet, as already described in this biography. Addressing the noble Chairman with peculiar emphasis, the poet proceeded:—

"I sang the Abolition of the Slave Trade, that most glorious decree of the British legislature, at any period since the Revolution by the first parliament, in which you, my lord, sat as the representative of Yorkshire. Oh! how should I rejoice to sing the Abolition of Slavery itself by some parliament of which your lordship shall be a member! This greater act of righteous legislation is surely not too remote to be expected even in our day. Renouncing the slave trade was only 'ceasing to do evil;' extinguishing slavery will be 'learning to do well.' And this, I am convinced, may be accomplished with perfect safety to the colonies, perfect justice to the planters (for we would 'wrong no man'), and perfect mercy to the slaves, whom we would not abandon to the dangers of a liberty for which they were unprepared. The means whereby this may be done need not now be particularised; I should not have mentioned the subject at all, if I had not been persuaded that such means are within our reach; and I have alluded to it thus *incidentally*, not as a question of politics, but of morality.

"Again: I sang of love,—the love of country, the love of my own country; for

> ——————— "'next to heaven above,
> Land of my fathers, thee I love;
> And, rail thy slanderers as they will,
> With all thy faults, I love thee still.'

I sang, likewise, the love of home, its charities, endearments,

and relationships, all that makes 'Home *sweet* home;' the recollection of which, when the air of that name was just now played from yonder gallery, warmed every heart throughout this room into quicker pulsations: I sang the love which man ought to bear towards his brother, of every kindred, and country, and clime upon the earth: I sang the love of virtue, which elevates man to his true standard under heaven: I sang, too, the love of God, who *is* love. Nor did I sing in vain. I found readers, especially among the young, the fair, and the devout; and as youth, beauty, and devotion will not soon cease out of the land, I may hope to be remembered through another generation at least. I will add that, from every part of the British empire, from every quarter of the world where our language is spoken, from America, the East and West Indies, from New Holland, and the South Sea Islands themselves, I have occasionally received testimonies of approbation from all ranks and degrees of readers, hailing what I had done, and cheering me forward. I allude not to criticisms and eulogiums from the press, but to voluntary communications from unknown correspondents, coming to me like voices out of darkness, and giving intimation of that which a poet is always hearkening onward to catch—the voice of posterity.

"But I might have been a notable politician in my day, and forgotten as soon as my day was over; I might have been a far greater poet than I am, and left a name behind me which would have rendered illustrious the place where I had so long resided; and, in either case, honours and rewards suitable to my pretensions might have been conferred upon me, but they would not have been such as my townspeople and neighbours have bestowed upon me this day. For these I am principally indebted to a circumstance of equal interest both to the benefactors and the beneficiary; it is this,—I have been your *fellow-labourer* in many a great and good work for the amelioration of the condition, not of the poor only, but of every class of the community in Sheffield and Hallamshire. In all your public, benevolent, literary, and Christian institutions, I have shared with you

the burthen and heat of the day; and while I feel, and feel humbled by the recollection, that in many respects I have been grievously deficient, and in none have done more than it was my duty to do, I can easily account for the distinguishing marks of favour towards myself by coadjutors, from the mere accident of my situation among them having been a very conspicuous one. Connected with the press, that most effective engine of public agency, I was necessarily, as well as willingly, connected with public business of every kind. All eyes, therefore, have been continually upon me; and, as I have seldom done absolutely ill, and *appeared* to be, generally — nay, I will say, sincerely, that *I was* actually — endeavouring to do well, I have gained credit for my deeds rather proportioned to my obvious intentions than my positive merits. The rewards and honours which I am now enjoying through your kindness, therefore, are not hasty expressions of temporary feeling, — they have been more than thirty years in preparation. For these I return my most fervent and cordial acknowledgments; but, in conclusion, I must frankly state the situation in which you have placed me from this day forward.

"You have brought me to this altar of hospitality. We have broken bread, we have eaten salt together. And you have done this, not merely to give me a splendid proof, in the eyes of all the world, of the estimation in which you hold my general conduct and character since I became an inhabitant of Sheffield, but you have done it, also, to require of me a pledge that my future conduct and character shall correspond with the past. And I give it you freely, fully, hand, and heart, and voice; here devoting my abilities, so far as they shall be acceptable, to the service of my townspeople, my fellow-creatures, and (through his enabling grace) of my God. But let me remind you, that you have committed to my keeping a very perilous charge. The honour awarded to me is one — with all deference to your judgment — which, much to the credit of your hearts, may have been carried away by your liberality; that honour is one, which perhaps ought rather to have been posthumous

than antedated. For particular exploits of warriors, special services of public men, meritorious acts of private persons, similar testimonies of contemporary applause have been often given; but, on ground so comprehensive as the result of the whole public and private career of an individual like myself, such honours have rarely been conceded. And rarely ought they to be conceded, because they are not only inestimably precious in themselves, but they lay the subject of them under a weight of responsibility, almost too much for flesh and blood to bear. You have trusted to my discretion, while yet living, the very character which it ought to have been, and which it has been, the object of my whole life's labour to obtain, that I might leave it behind at my decease. Now, instead of having to look forward to this, as something to be won only with my latest breath, you have met me before the race was finished, placed the prize in my hands, and I have thus to carry it to the goal, at the risk of forfeiting it, more to my disgrace than if I had never started for it, or miscarried in attempting to gain it at last. I have henceforth to take heed—and oh! how much heed will it require!—not to lose this treasure by the way, from negligence, from error, from inconsistency, from apostacy. 'No man can be pronounced happy till he is dead,' said a sage of antiquity. I may say, in the same spirit, no man's character is secure till death has set the seal of eternity upon it. Mine, however, unsealed, you have given into my own custody. Recollecting that the credit of yours is now implicated with it, I shall have a double motive to deliver safely, and in due course, this yet unratified instrument at the grave, there to be enregistered till the great day of account. If I succeed in doing this, I may with confidence leave the care of my good name to your posterity.

"But this is a birthday, and such occasions ought to be joyous. The learned Egyptians used to introduce the emblems of mortality at their entertainments, to remind the guests amidst their festivities that all men must die. Something of this kind I have caused to pass before you; but it is gone. And now, as every one present has had a birthday in

his time, I heartily wish for him many happy commemorations of the same, yea, and happier seasons even than these, in the returning anniversaries of those, whom each will remember for himself when I remind him of his home and of all whom he loves there."

Some other toasts were proposed, after which Mr. Montgomery, on retiring, said,—

"So much has already been spoken by me and about me, on this festive occasion, that it would be folly and impertinence in me to add one unnecessary word, where any additional word would be unnecessary. I therefore simply refer to language which I have already used. I did look forward to this day with mingled terror and delight. The terror has departed, but the delight will long remain. I have called this table the altar of hospitality. I shall often remember with gratitude how sumptuously you have entertained me at it; and remembering this, I can never forget the pledge which I have left upon it."

As soon as Mr. Montgomery had retired, the noble Chairman observed,—

"If we have previously felt towards the distinguished guest, whom we have entertained this evening, sentiments of love, I will venture to assert, after what we have seen and heard from him during this meeting, those sentiments have been greatly strengthened."—(Great applause.)

On retiring from the festive scene just alluded to, Montgomery, so far from being intoxicated with praise honourable alike to the giver and the receiver, was glad to be recalled to his wonted bias of religious thought and feeling by congratulations in a more solemn tone from his esteemed friend the Rev. Theophilus Lessey of Halifax.

"Halifax, Nov. 23. 1825.

"When," says the faithful preacher to the flattered poet, "I was last favoured with your society, I entered, with more

than ordinary interest, into the various and affecting events which have marked the progress of your life, both in its persecuted and in its prosperous course. I had always felt the most profound veneration for your exalted genius, and had loved you for the magnanimous and self-denying consecration of it to the glory of the cross; but from that time I became attached to you by sentiments and emotions of a more individual character, and I have consequently beheld your recent triumph with feelings far more tender and penetrating than I could otherwise have done. Will you forgive me, then, if I say that my heart, with all the warmth and glow of friendship, has attended you through every step of your progress on that memorable occasion?

"In former times you were made to feel the bitterness of affliction, and you have frequently had to drink, in secret, from the cup of sorrow; but this is a chord I have no right to touch; it is the sanctuary into which I must not enter. And I shall only remind you, that while you were thus tried, your heavenly Father has been employed in polishing one of his precious jewels against that day when He will make it up, with millions more, and give it a place in the mediatorial crown of the Redeemer. I know, my dear friend, that to your heart this is the noblest and most desirable consummation that eternity itself can reveal. All the afflictive circumstances of your life have been brought about by infinite wisdom, and with the most benign intentions. But why should I write in this strain, when your cup of felicity is running over? only because it came into my mind. I have contemplated the honours with which you have been arrayed as the fruits of a victory, a glorious victory, in which the whole Christian world should participate. It is the triumph of truth, and virtue, and piety, over error, and vice, and impiety. Your muse has been persecuted for righteousness' sake; and after having passed through much tribulation, she now appears, like the saints before the throne, clothed in white raiment, and holding in her hand the emblematic palm. . . . . A voice from the throne of the Eternal is heard, saying, 'Be thou faithful

unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' This is in reserve for you, and will infinitely surpass all the honour that comes from man. My feeble but sincere prayers are daily offered up on your behalf, that you may possess all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

But duties of a practical nature awaited him. The following letter not only exhibits an illustration of the unwearied zeal of the distinguished writer in the great cause of popular education, with which his name will ever stand associated, but it shows also his regard for the local experience and trustworthy opinions of others.

Henry Brougham to James Montgomery.

"London, Nov. 6. 1825.

"DEAR SIR,

"I hope you will excuse me for troubling you again upon the important subject of our last year's correspondence. I am anxious to learn the progress made since then by the Sheffield Mechanics' Institution; and you would confer a great favour on me by giving me whatever information you deem material on that head. I am particularly anxious to know which of the rules and regulations have been found to require alteration; and whether further experience has confirmed the favourable opinion we had of the original plan generally. Let me especially direct your attention to these points — the readiness of the working men to adopt suggestions from the honorary members — what proportion of the latter have been chosen on the committee — whether the regulation about appeal to the ministers has been acted on — whether many apprentices have taken the benefits of the society — and whether many members have lost the benefit by being in the workhouse or prison — also, whether any lectures have been given (on this most important part of the subject possibly some assistance might be rendered from hence: we are endeavouring to facilitate lecturing by different means). I should like to know whether you observe the younger members more assiduous, and benefiting

more by the Institution — whether any evils arise from discussions of private business, as rules, &c. — and whether any ill blood exists from the elections of committee or other cause.

"It would be most gratifying to find that other instances, besides those you mentioned to me, had occurred of working men betaking themselves to scientific pursuits at leisure hours as a relaxation, and as loving inquiry and speculation for its own sake. Do you apprehend that good would be done if a person were to come among them and deliver a course of very plain lectures on the pleasures to be derived from science — proving these to be great, by going over all the natural sciences, and just teaching enough of each, in the plainest way, to give persons, then first made acquainted with the subject, a comprehension of *what it was about*, and a sample or taste (as it were) of its truths? I mention this *to yourself* only, and wishing your free opinion. The object would be to set them a thinking and reading, — to give them a taste, so that they might desire more, — which could only be got by reading, or attending lectures which should go more fully into each branch.

"As I have lost the original *rules* you gave me last year, may I further trouble you for another copy?

"Believe me to be, with great esteem,

"Yours truly,

"H. BROUGHAM.

"P. S.—If you know of any Mechanics' Institutions established in your part of the country since last year, and could favour me with the name of the secretary, or other person taking an active part in them, I should be desirous of obtaining information from such quarters, and should write.

"James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

What answer Montgomery returned to this letter we do not know; but as the Mechanics' Library and the Mechanics' Institution were separate concerns, and the former, at least, not only unexceptionably but suc-

cessfully answering the purpose of its promoters, he would confine his remarks chiefly to it. Of the other, it is enough here to say that he knew how to distinguish between its essentially sound principles and those accidents of administration which may lessen or mar the usefulness, where parity of interest and freedom of action are recognised and maintained.

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Sheffield, Nov. 25. 1825.

"My dear Friend,

"Mr. Holland allows me to slip a line into the parcel with the returned albums. Those are excellent books indeed of the kind, which are not worse after they have been written in than they were before. I can only thank you for all the kind sayings in your last two letters; and if I were to fill ten sheets with acknowledgments, they would not express more than I mean in plain 'thank you'—for it comes from my heart, and is uttered there in two pulses with an emphasis which all the words in the dictionary could not exceed. As for your 'History of Methodism' [in Sheffield], if you determine to have [the printing of] it finished in Manchester, it will be no difficult matter to match the paper; you can order it yourself of Mr. Glover, paper manufacturer, of Leeds, at 23*s.* or 24*s.* per ream. The type, I should fear, would be less likely to be exact, if undertaken at another office: it is Small Pica; but then every font of Small Pica differs a little from every other. However, you can try specimens by getting a page set up. Whatever you determine, if I can serve you, command me freely. I will not be so disingenuous as to affect to conceal what I know has been told you, in a much better way than I could do it,—that your precious balsams sometimes break my head. I allude, of course, at *this* time, to the verses in Miss ——'s album, which may do very well between you and me, because I fully understand the simplicity and sincerity of your meaning; but the world, the

world—the ridiculing, the ridiculous world—would not tolerate them; and it is right, in this respect, that the awe even of the profane scorner should teach the best men discretion. You may say they are written for such only as can understand them in the integrity and ardour of their own unsophisticated feelings; but this will not do. 'What I have written I have written,' said Pilate on a certain occasion; and what he wrote then will not be blotted out to all eternity. What has been once written, and has once passed into other hands or under other eyes, may rise up at an unexpected moment, years upon years afterwards, when all that justified it at the time has perished from record, and nothing but apparent extravagance or absurdity may remain on the face of it to strangers. Forgive this hint, and apply it to more cases than that which has caused it to be now given, in the faithfulness of friendship, and as one of the hardest tests of friendship to which the writer could have been put by you.*

"My best regards to Mrs. Everett, and believe me

"Ever your obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. James Everett, Manchester."

At the close of this year appeared the "Christian Psalmist; or, Hymns, Selected and Original." These compositions, 562 in number, are from a great variety of authors, including 100 from his own pen, traces of which are also evident in many of the rest. The work went through several editions, and was very acceptable to the religious public. The "Introductory Essay" contains some judicious remarks on Hymnology, as one branch of the poetic art, and on the works of several of those who have excelled in it. The following passage will show how much more is required to consti-

* It need hardly be explained that the poet's objection to the verses in question arose from the fact that they contained some complimentary allusions to himself.

tute excellence even in a hymn, than many ready and some popular writers of religious rhymes under that designation seem to imagine: —

"A hymn ought to be as regular in its structure as any other poem; it should have a distinct subject, and that subject should be simple, not complicated, so that whatever skill or labour might be required in the author to develop his plan, there should be little or none required on the part of the reader to understand it. Consequently, a hymn must have a beginning, middle, and end. There should be a manifest gradation in the thoughts; and their mutual dependence should be so perceptible that they could not be transposed without injuring the unity of the piece; every line carrying forward the connection, and every verse adding a well-proportioned limb to a symmetrical body. The reader should know when the strain is complete, and be satisfied, as at the close of an air in music; while defects and superfluities should be felt by him as annoyances, in whatever part they might occur. The practice of many good men, in framing hymns, has been quite the contrary. They have begun apparently with the only idea in their mind at the time; another, with little relationship to the former, has been forced upon them by a refractory rhyme; a third became necessary to eke out a verse; a fourth, to begin one; and so on, till, having compiled a sufficient number of stanzas of so many lines, and lines of so many syllables, the operation has been suspended; whereas it might, with equal consistency, have been continued to any imaginable length, and the tenth or ten thousandth link might have been struck out or changed places with any other, without the slightest infraction of the chain; the whole being a series of independent verses, collocated as they came, and the burden a cento of phrases, figures, and ideas, the common property of every writer who has none of his own, and therefore found in the works of each, unimproved, if not unimpaired, from generation to generation. Such rhapsodies may be sung from time to time,

and keep alive devotion already kindled; but they leave no trace in the memory, make no impression on the heart, and fall through the mind as sounds glide through the ear, — pleasant, it may be, in their passage, but never returning to haunt the imagination in retirement, or, in the multitude of the thoughts, to refresh the soul. Of how contrary a character, how transcendently superior in value as well as influence, are those hymns which, once heard, are remembered without effort, — remembered involuntarily, yet remembered with renewed and increasing delight at every revival! It may be safely affirmed that the permanent favourites in every collection are those which, in the requisites before mentioned, or for some other peculiar excellence, are distinguished above the rest."

By this strict canon of composition and criticism let the tasteful reader try Montgomery's "Christian Psalmist," and "Original Hymns."

He seems, at one time, to have projected a poem on the destruction of Pompeii, as appears from a collection of memorandums, and the following lines on the subject, which we have seen among his papers: —

"Pompeii's day is come at last,
Her pride shall to the dust go down;
Pompeii's fatal hour is past,
And where is now the vanished town?
Earth opened not her jaws
To swallow up the prey,
Nor ocean brake the eternal laws
To sweep her mounds away.
From heaven the sudden ruin came,
Ingulphed but unconsumed,
A storm of ashes shot through flame,
Temples and towers entombed. . . ."

A theme of a very different character was recommended to him at the close of this very year by a writer

in the "Quarterly Review." In an article on Pope's Works, occurs the following passage in reference to Eloisa:—

"It is matter of regret that the genius of Pope had not been employed in exhibiting the antidote as well as the bane;—that he, who has so powerfully portrayed the morbid state of Eloisa's mind, had not also depicted Abelard's deep contrition; his prostration of heart in recognition of Divine justice; his unaffected forgiveness and almost justification of his enemies; and the purified tenderness of his sentiments for her who was still to him the most beloved of human beings. These feelings may be found in Abelard's letters, expressed in language at once simple and animated; and combined with congenial matter to be supplied by the poet, would form a subject admirably adapted to the genius and character of Montgomery, to whom we take the liberty of suggesting the theme."*

That the subject was "adapted to the genius" of Montgomery may be admitted, but certainly not to his character; for though as a Christian he would have imbued it with a deep and tender pathos, suited to the penitence of the Paraclete — assuming its reality — still the whole story of these unfortunate lovers is identified with associations which, to the purity of our poet's mind, must have been utterly abhorrent. It may, indeed, well be doubted whether Pope will ever be deprived of the merit which Johnson has ascribed to his treatment of this tempting theme, — "that he has excelled every composition of the kind."

* Quarterly Review, June—Oct. 1825, p. 300.

CHAP. LX.

1826.

MONTGOMERY AS AN EX-EDITOR. — FEELINGS AND SENTIMENTS. — FRANCIS QUARLES. — ELECTRICITY OF THE BODY. — EPITAPH. — CHURCH-RATE CONFLICT. — THE "AIREDALE POET."—MONTGOMERY'S KINDNESS TO HIM. — VERSES TO MR. CONNOR. — PHRENOLOGY AND THE HINDOOS. — BANK PANIC. — LAUGHING GAS. — LETTER TO J. EVERETT. — VISIT TO MANCHESTER AND LIVERPOOL. — EPITAPH. — VERSES TO HARRIET MONTGOMERY. — LETTER FROM JOHN CLARE. — SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION. — LETTER TO J. EVERETT. — TO MRS. FOSTER. — TO MR. BENNET.

THE year upon which we now enter may be said to have been the commencement of a new era in the life of Montgomery, — for having done with the harassments and anxieties of a newspaper politician, he could devote himself entirely to polite literature and the calls of benevolence: nor—if the collocation may be permitted —was it less important to the writer of this paragraph, as the first in a quarter of a century of public journalism the vicissitudes of which were as little foreseen when he took up the editorial pen which had just been laid down by his revered friend, as that the valuable life of the latter would be protracted through the still longer period embraced by the remaining portion of this work. And this official succession was by no means an unwelcome accident, so far as the poet was concerned; for— as the retiring tallow-chandler, mentioned in the "Spectator," stipulated with his successor to be allowed to revisit his establishment on "melting-days"—our friend

soon found his way to the new "Iris" office, the penetrale of which was, of course, always open to him; while the playful tone in which he would sometimes introduce a paragraph, with "if you approve of it, Mr. Editor," has never been forgotten.

In a letter to Mr. Everett (Jan. 6.), Montgomery says, —

"I am at this hour exquisitely tortured on account of a very small circumstance in my life, in which I was as innocent and as passive as a new-born babe; and yet, by the injustice of opinion, am punished as though I had been a criminal. It will be weeks, perhaps months, before my wounded spirit can be healed on this point, and the scar I must carry to my grave. Can any one, then, blame me, or think hard of me, for warning younger persons than myself to beware how they act and speak even in little things, lest they lay up for themselves unimagined sorrows in their latter days? In reply to one of your inquiries, I have noticed the passage in the 'Quarterly Review' to which you refer. I dare not touch the theme which they recommend; there are too many unhallowed and horrible associations with it. Beside, I am not in tone for any great exercise of my small poetic powers at present. I am under a cloud of discouragement; it may be partly from bodily infirmity, but my spirit has been rebuked, and may not soon come to itself again. Meanwhile I am preparing materials for a 'Christian Poet,' to follow my 'Christian Psalmist.'"

Then follows a commission for several scarce old books from the catalogue of a Manchester dealer. It is not necessary to explain the circumstances referred to in the former part of the preceding extract, to give force to the lesson inculcated by the writer. The subsequent reference is to those remarks on the "Epistle of Eloisa," in an article on "Pope's Works and Cha-

racter," which are quoted at the close of the preceding chapter. In reference to this period, we once heard a preacher say, "I recollect I once took a great liberty with our honoured friend,—at least I thought so afterwards. We had introduced a Prayer Meeting into Norfolk Street Chapel, and I called upon him to engage in prayer; and never shall I forget the petition he offered, and the feelings it excited among all who heard it. I feel greatly obliged to Mr. Montgomery for the advice he often gave me on the subject of my ministry, and which I have never forgotten."

Jan. 26. Mr. Holland dined with Montgomery at Mr. Blackwell's. As he was busy with his collection of Sacred Poetry, the conversation turned on that subject; and, among others, the names of Quarles and Wither were mentioned. *Montgomery:* "I know not in English literature a name that has been, in many respects, more wronged than that of Francis Quarles; wronged too, in times past, by those who ought best to have discerned, and most generously to have distinguished, between merits and defects, both partaking of the peculiarities of the age. I grant, at once, that both he and Wither have injured their own fame more than either the slanders of their contemporaries or the neglect of posterity could otherwise have done;—Quarles especially, by the quantity of crude matter with which he has encumbered some of his finest conceptions, as well as by the base phraseology with which he has often profaned his purest, loveliest, and otherwise most felicitous diction." *Holland:* "But is not that an admission in favour of the sentence of his poetical brethren?" *Montgomery:* "No; and certainly not to the extent of justifying their indiscriminate slanders: for while his faults are sometimes so laboured that they

seem to have been committed on purpose, his beauties, on the other hand, are, apparently, so spontaneous, that they alone, amidst his anomalous compositions, seem to be natural to him." *Blackwell:* "There is some truth in old Pomfret's remark, that to please nobody would be as much a new thing as to please everybody." *Montgomery:* "Yes; but to rest that opinion on a sneer at 'Quarles and Withers,' is amusing enough on the part of one who is not fit to be named with them. He has not a thought two feet high in his whole collection; for his 'Choice,' which has been praised, what is it but the common-place confession of an idle man, who wishes to be idler still?" *Blackwell:* "Do you intend to give extracts from Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher?" *Montgomery:* "From the former, but not from the latter. I once bought an old edition of their works, which I found such a stye of filthiness, that I felt I could neither keep it nor sell it conscientiously; so I cut out the fine portrait of Fletcher, gave it to a collector of prints, and burnt the book." He then mentioned some amusing instances of perplexity which had arisen to himself and others, when players had been introduced to him by persons ignorant or regardless of his non-theatrical views. Something being said about electricity, the poet described an occurrence which had startled him the night before. On drawing over his head a clean elastic worsted shirt—the room being dark—he noticed a sudden illumination about his face, accompanied with a crackling sound. Instead of seeking to protract this curious electric phenomena, he instinctively threw from him across the chamber the garment, which he declared was quite luminous as it left his hand.

Under the date of Jan. 26. we have the following lines:—

"*To the Memory of a Young Girl, who had been much delighted by a Discourse on the Ministry of Angels, which she had heard a short Time before her last Illness.*

"Visions of angels, beautiful and kind,
Turned to a Paradise thine infant mind;
They seemed at home within so pure a breast,
Yet vanished soon, for here was not *their* rest,
Nor *thine*,—like those in Jacob's dream, they trod
A ladder, rising to the throne of God:
And taught thy little steps that easier way
From night on earth to heaven's eternal day.
Angels ere long, but not in vision, spread
Their golden pinions round thy dying bed,
And in their arms thy ransomed spirit bore,
With songs of joy, where death shall be no more.
Dwell there, sweet saint, in bliss with Him above,
Who loved thee with an everlasting love,
And wait the answer to thine only prayer
Yet unfulfilled,—that we may meet thee there."

About this time the inhabitants of the parish of Sheffield were in a state of intense excitement on the subject of church-rates, the laws relating to which—or, at all events, the interpretation and effect of those laws —are in a most unsatisfactory state. This is now generally admitted; and hence arose an important local question, the merits of which can nowise interest the reader of these pages, except in connection with the fact that Montgomery was largely involved in the controversy—not as a partisan, but as a mediator between the vicar and his officials on the one side, and the parishioners on the other side, as in vestry assembled. At a public meeting, held January 16., to consider the

propriety of levying a rate to defray the expense of enclosing the burying-grounds of three new churches erected in Sheffield, under the "Million Act," a resolution was passed, adjourning the meeting, after appointing Montgomery and two other gentlemen a deputation to wait upon the church burgesses*, and lay before them the sentiments of the vestry. Montgomery drew up a long memorial to the burgesses, in which he says, "The only hope of inducing the inhabitants, without the compulsion of an ecclesiastical process, to grant a rate for the particular objects above specified,—or, indeed, any other,—rests upon the probability of your consenting to resume the payment of those charges connected with the services and repairs of the parish church, which had been defrayed out of the funds belonging to your trust for upwards of two hundred and fifty years; but which have been for some time past disallowed by you, and borne by the persons who happened to be churchwardens, out of their own private purses, to their great wrong and injury, as well as to the discredit of the parish, and the detriment, in some respects, of the services of the church." This reasoning prevailed with the burgesses: they agreed to resume their accustomed payments; and as Montgomery had taken his part in the negotiation in good faith, he was not thenceforward personally willing to offer any opposition to a rate for enclosing the cemeteries, and providing some fittings for the churches in question. Very different, however, were the intentions of the majority of his constituents, as will be seen afterwards.

One cold day in the month of January, Montgomery was called down stairs to see a man whose stout form, fresh cheek, keen dark eye, and tortoise-like movement

* Trustees of an estate out of which they support three clergymen to assist the vicar.

struck him in a moment; nor was his surprise lessened when the stranger at once said, "My name is Nicholson; I am the Airedale poet: I have walked sixty miles for the purpose of seeing you." Montgomery told him he was afraid he would be badly compensated for so long a journey. He then told his tale of sorrow; it was that of many an inexperienced author: a poor Bradford wool-sorter, he had found himself a poet, had become the subject of local wonder and admiration, printed a thousand copies of his little volume of verse, sold every one of them, and put the proceeds into his pocket. He was then persuaded to print a second edition of the same number, of which he had sold but a few; so that all the money he had realised by the first, was likely to be thrown away by the second experiment. Better and worse luck, as Montgomery told him, could hardly have come more nearly together. While they were in conversation, Mr. Samuel Roberts was announced. *Montgomery:* "I have a poet in the parlour; allow me to introduce you to him." *Roberts:* "No; I will have nothing to do with him." But with a little management, Mr. R. was led forward, his surprise at the peculiar appearance of the stranger being at once evident and amusing. For a while he was very cool and distant; not so Nicholson, who presently so won upon Mr. R. that the latter thrusting a bank note into the poet's hand, "let me have," said he, "half-a-dozen copies of your book"—an order which brought tears into the eyes of the poor man, whose "unvarnished tale" had produced such a result. Montgomery promised Nicholson that he would read his book, and if he found nothing in it objectionable, and could in any way recommend it, he would do so. He had not read long before he felt his pulse begin to beat quicker; and throwing down the book, "this man," said he, "is a

poet." Having read through the volume, he immediately, as the best way of serving the author, wrote the following letter to meet him at Leeds: —

James Montgomery to John Nicholson.

"Sheffield, Jan. 28. 1826.

"SIR,

"I am glad that I did not give you my opinion of your verse, in writing, while my mind was under the influence of its first unexpected impressions, because I can now say that, after reading your volume through in the course of the day, and when the former glow of feeling is past, my judgment deliberately approves of the decision of my heart in its delightful surprise at finding your compositions not merely smooth and agreeable, but powerful and pathetic in no ordinary degree, whenever the subject is of sufficient dignity or interest to awaken the poet within you,—the poet that (I am very willing to believe) was born with you.

"I take it for granted that you may have had the help of some judicious friend, in the way of advice at least if not correction, to enable you to avoid many of the grosser faults into which it is no reproach upon unlettered genius to fall; but in your book there is much that could never have been taught you, nor interpolated by another, however skilful and accomplished he might be. With a very small proportion of the defects and errors of verse, written under circumstances so disadvantageous as yours, a spirit of genuine poesy breathes through the whole, and there are passages which the most celebrated of your contemporaries might be proud to have written, and which prove that poetry with you is like song to the lark, or fragrance to the rose, — the natural language of your tongue, the pure emanation of your soul. Were you about to publish a new edition of these pieces, I should have read them with more critical severity, and have pointed out various imperfections which ought to be remedied. Unfortunately, however, your second edition is published, and it is the duty of your friends to dwell upon its merits, without decrying its faults, in the

hope of recommending it to strangers, and inducing the benevolent to purchase copies, — not merely to relieve you from the burthen of unsold hundreds, now lying upon your hands, but to gratify themselves with a perusal of strains well worthy of being rewarded as well as read.

"You have now experienced something of the sweets and bitters of authorship; enough, I hope, of the latter to make you careful never again to expose yourself to the hazard of such a loss as you have lately had cause to fear, and the misery, anxiety, and labour which you must continue to experience till you feel yourself (by the sale of a large portion of your volumes in stock) easy again in your mind and in your circumstances. If my sincere and hearty testimony to the sterling character of your talents, however rude to fastidious taste some of your performances may appear, can be of any service in calling the attention of individuals or the public to your name and your book, you may make what use you please of this letter.

"I am, truly your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

In the following year Nicholson published another volume of verse, but greatly inferior in quality to the former, for he had fallen into habits of intemperance; and having also indulged in some sneers at the religion which he once professed, he wrote to Montgomery in a penitential strain, and received from him some serious advice, which it would have been well for him had he reduced to practice.*

* Poor man! he was accidentally drowned in the river Aire, on the night of April 14. 1843. "Without the wish to darken the shadows of his character by one uncharitable reflection, it may be usefully remarked, that amidst the numerous instances recorded of obscure but irrepressible genius struggling and sinking unbefriended to the grave, the case of John Nicholson illustrates the less common but perhaps not less striking truth, that when the conduct of the life gives way, mental power is commonly possessed and patronage exerted in vain."—*Yorkshire Poets*, p. 179.

The following verses were addressed—

"*To the Rev. Samuel Connor, on reading his Memoir of the late Mrs. C., who died Jan. 5.* 1826, *aged* 32 *Years.*

"She rests in peace; for her no care
Again can wring affection's breast;
She hath no sorrow now to share,
And will you grieve that she is blest?

"Weep not for her, from whose dear eye
God hath for ever wiped all tears;
Nor o'er that buried image sigh,
Hid but till Christ, her life, appears.

"No longer at the mercy-seat
For her your pleading soul you lay;
And is not then *her* joy complete,
For whom e'en love may cease to pray?

"Yet care for those sweet babes she left;
Yet in your lonely chamber weep;
Sigh, of such fellowship bereft,
And even prayer her memory keep.

"Let Nature mourn, resigned and still,
Till He who wounded heals the heart;
And, since it was a Father's will,
Believe it best that ye should part.

"Does she repine? In marvellous light
She sees what you in darkness see,—
That all His ways are just and right,
Whose counsels reach eternity.

"Ockbrook, April 24. 1826."

Montgomery had especial interest in the memory of this good woman and the trials of her husband, having allowed himself to become a sponsor on the baptism of their child, to whom his own name was given at the font, as we learn from the following playful rhymes, addressed —

"*To James Connor, of Ockbrook, aged* 11 *Years, Dec.* 1834.
My God-child! May you be a Child of God!

"Our Saviour had two disciples, whose names
Remind me of you, for each was called *James;*
Now James is like Jacob, and means a deceiver,
Yet either of these was a faithful believer.

"One James was John's brother, our Lord's was the other;
But the glory of both was, through suffering and loss,
To tread in His footsteps, and carry the cross.

"May you, with these twain, your calling obtain
To publish His word,—and be James, the third
Disciple of Jesus, through honour and shame,
To boast *not your own*, but rejoice in *His* name."

Feb. 3. Montgomery read at the monthly meeting of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society, a paper on Phrenology, as connected with the developments and character of the Hindoos; and on the 7th of April a continuation of the same, in relation to the negro. In the February of the year following he delivered a public lecture before a large audience at the Music Hall, consisting substantially of these two essays. His object was less to discuss or deny the claims of phrenology as a method of ascertaining the leading characteristics of the mind from the external conformation of the head, than to rebut certain conclusions of a moral kind, too hastily drawn by the bold disciples, and too passionately regarded by some timid oppugners, of this so-called science. His leading argument was to this purport — that, were phrenology established to the utmost extent of its reasonable advocates, it involves no issues of fatality, nor could it, from the mere circumstance of organical conformation, elevate one class

of our fellow creatures into intellectual eminence, or consign another class to perpetual mental degradation.

"If," said Montgomery, "phrenology were merely, like Hindooism, a system of *castes*, and every tribe of mankind, by a fatality of organisation, were, according to its doctrines, doomed to be, through all stages of society, savage, semi-barbarian, or civilised, the same as their fathers had been in one or the other of these stages,—if phrenology were *such* a system of castes, I for one would abjure it without requiring any further evidence of its utter absurdity, and point-blank contradiction to all the records of history, the testimony of living experience, and the whole result of man's knowledge of himself and his species. A science, involving such anomalous consequences, could not be of God, and would not stand. His works are perfect, however slowly their issues may be produced;—they are perfect, because they include in their very rudiments the principles by which they *must* go on to perfection, if not unnaturally obstructed; and even then the interruption can be only temporary, while their power and tendency to progression revive in undiminished activity the moment the hindrance is removed. If this be the case in all inferior subjects of the animal and even of the vegetable creation, is it possible that the masterpiece of the Almighty should be the only incorrigibly defective work of his hand? No; let science search out every secret of the universe, she has nothing to fear except error;—error in the guise of truth, or truth adulterated with error;—every pure truth that she can discover must be a new revelation of God in his visible universe, and a new confirmation of the authenticity of that word which reveals the things that are unseen and eternal;—things absolutely undiscoverable by physical investigation, and necessarily irrefutable by that which could not have found them out. Let, then, phrenology be established throughout in all its ramifications so far as positive facts compel inductions as the only alternative of those facts, and the Christian need not tremble for his religion, nor the philanthropist for his hope of the ultimate civilisation of every class of the human race, whatever be their present darkness

of mind, depravity of manners, or preposterous developments of skull."

Feb. 19. In consequence of an unfounded notion that parliament was about to put an immediate stop to the circulation of one-pound notes, a panic was created among a certain class of the inhabitants of Sheffield, and the consequence was, what is termed " a run " upon the local banks for gold. This unusual and unwarrantable movement threatened very serious inconvenience, first, to the parties who were expected to redeem thousands of notes in hard cash, simultaneously and at a moment's notice; and secondly, to the tradesmen and shopkeepers, who had been constantly in the habit of taking the paper. To counteract this mischievous mania, a public meeting was convened by the Master Cutler; and Montgomery, as a person well able to deal both intelligently and discreetly with a subject of such vital importance, and as possessing the entire confidence of his townspeople, was prevailed upon to occupy a foremost position in the meeting, and explain the whole case. This onerous duty he successfully discharged in a long and admirable speech, which, resulting in the proposal and adoption of certain resolutions, had the effect of immediately restornig confidence, and thus putting an end to the panic. It seemed somewhat curious to find the man who was known to be engaged with the compilation of the " Christian Poet," taking this conspicuous and responsible part in assuring the present stability of the local banking establishments — though not more curious than the appearance of Bishop Kaye behind the bank-counter of the Messrs. Mortlock, at Cambridge, during " a run" on their establishment in 1824.*

* Vide Whychcote of St. John's, vol. ii. p. 199.

Montgomery: "I once received a letter from good Thomas Alliss, the Quaker, to this effect—'Friend James Montgomery, wilt thou be kind enough to favour me with a copy of the verses composed by thee after inhaling the nitrous oxide?'" *Holland:* "Did you ever breathe the laughing gas?" *Montgomery:* "I did; but I neither laughed nor made verses on the occasion.* It was in a party of friends, who were very anxious I should submit to the experiment: I consented, and on the removal of the flask, everything seemed to be swimming around me; but I had still the consciousness and the power to make a mental effort; and flinging myself on a sofa, I passed through the ordeal without making any foolish exhibition."

When M. Alexandre, the celebrated ventriloquist, visited Sheffield, at the beginning of this year, he called upon Montgomery, less with the expectation of getting him to patronise his extraordinary performance, than with a wish to add his autograph to one of the most curious collections of the kind which we ever saw. The poet wrote the following:—

"*To M. Alexandre, the Ventriloquist.*

"'Fama . . . . .
. . . cui quot sunt corpore plumæ,
Tot linguæ.' Virg. *Æn.* iv. 174—183.

"Stranger, I need not ask thy name,
I know thee by thy wondrous lungs;
Thou art the genuine son of Fame,
Talking with all thy mother's tongues.

"Feb. 18. 1826."

---

* Southey once inhaled it. Vide Cottle's "Recollections," vol. ii. p. 36.

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Sheffield, Feb. 24. 1826.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I have heard no more concerning your newspaper and know not when the first number will appear, or whether it will appear at all. It struck me, however, this afternoon, that I had promised you a few lines for a corner, and that unless I sent them forthwith, they would be, like most of my performances, too late to be acceptable. These stanzas were written in reference to the circumstances of the family of the late Mr. Manwaring, the Methodist preacher here; but I purposely made them *general* and not *personal.** This will account for the apparent abruptness of the termination. I am weary of writing memorials of the dead; yet everybody thinks, that though nothing but common-place can be said in every *other* case, yet in *their own* there is something that would inspire a stone—even a gravestone—to write eloquently. If you use these lines, print them just as they are, without any reference to the occasion. The good man with the unrememberable name, whom you mentioned in the last, has not yet called upon me; and I dread so much the sight of a stranger,—of whom I can know nothing except that he expects something from me which may be very different from anything I can afford,—that I hope he will pass over me like a cloud, or by me like the wind. It is one of the penalties which I pay for my youthful ambition and my later notoriety, to be exposed to what, in the abstract, is very complimentary, and gratifying to better feelings than vanity—the visits and correspondence of those who think that *the man* is the same romantic and imaginative being which they have made *the poet* in their

* The Widow and the Fatherless.—*Works*, p. 313.

own minds. If you can get me Ford's books in a fortnight, it will be an accommodation; if not, do not trouble yourself.

"Your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. James Everett, Manchester."

April 1. Montgomery left Sheffield to attend Missionary Meetings at Liverpool and Chester; on his way he dined and spent the evening with Mr. Everett, who was then residing in Manchester. Being asked how the "Iris" succeeded with Mr. Blackwell? *Montgomery:* "Very well, I believe: the noise made by the falling of the old tree [alluding to the public dinner given to himself] helped it at the outset." Mr. Everett gave the poet six small prints, which had been issued as illustrations of his works. *Montgomery:* "Two or three of them are very well conceived: but let me tell you," said he, smiling, "the artist has taken a great liberty with my Zillah, whom I never allowed to put her arms round the neck of Javan in this manner: it is almost as indecorous as it would be in the case of any one of our [the Moravian] single sisters. A woman must have assumed the *blue ribbon*, before such a freedom could be permitted."* He was shown some verses at that time circulating through the newspapers with his name, and beginning—"O, had I the wings of a dove!" *Montgomery:* "They are not mine; and though smooth and pleasing, I am not anxious to take the credit of them. Do *you* think I should ever have written, in devotional poetry, such a line as 'A *fairy-scene* doth life

* Among the Moravians a plain blue ribbon over the cap is the badge of a married woman, as a yellow one of virginity, and a white one of widowhood; and these symbols are—or *were*—attached to the shrouds and funeral pall of the parties respectively.

appear?'" He conversed about the "Christian Poet," upon which he was then engaged; and mentioned several works which he was anxious to see. Mr. Everett afterwards furnished some of them, and also gave him the copy of a curious fragment from which he has given extracts under the name of "William Billyng," including some verses entitled "Earth upon Earth," which, in altered forms, have been attributed to various authors.* He complained that having, after repeated solicitation, and promises of liberal remuneration, written a long poem for the "Amulet,"† during the busiest period of his transfer of the "Iris" in the preceding year, he neither received money nor thanks, nor even a copy of the book, and he found others had similar grounds of complaint. The meeting at Chester was on the 3rd of April; and as Montgomery had never visited this ancient city before, Mr. Everett was glad to become his guide. They took a turn on the walls; had a sight of the Welsh mountains; looked into the county hall where the assizes were going on; called at two or three old book shops to inquire for sacred poetry; and then went along Water Street, where, among other inscriptions, the poet was struck with this, on the front of an old building—"God's Providence is mine Inheritance," immediately collating it with a verse in a collection of "Spiritual Songs," which Mr. Everett had shown him:—

"I do not bless my labouring hand,
My labouring head, or chance;
Thy providence, most gracious God,
Is mine inheritance."

---

* Notes and Queries, 1853.

† Elijah in the Wilderness.—*Works*, p. 239.

He was evidently unwell, and out of spirits, so that his speech at the meeting in the evening was less animated than usual. But, on the following evening, at Liverpool, he rose superior to his nervous depression, and produced a powerful impression on his audience. Dr. Raffles was anxious to have had Montgomery as his guest during this visit; but he said he had been "consigned, like a bale of goods, to the care of Mr. Byrom; and with him he should stay." He accompanied the Doctor, however, to a Home-Missionary meeting, at the chapel of the late Rev. P. Charrier, an Independent minister, who had just died, and left the annual report in short-hand, which nobody could decipher. This curious and affecting incident afforded an appropriate theme to our friend on this occasion. He returned home by way of Buxton, and on the 10th presided at a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting in Sheffield; acknowledging in his speech, very distinctly and gratefully, the obligations under which he lay to a body whose preachers had been the means of recalling him to the paths of piety and spiritual life.

In April he went to Ockbrook, on a visit to his brother Ignatius, as we learn from the following letter, the lines appended to which are on a tombstone in the churchyard of Workington, Cumberland, raised over the grave of Robert Dickenson, "a Christian poet, and distinguished by the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit: '*I am a man of peace,*' said he, '*and I love peace!*'"

James Montgomery to Miss Dickenson.

"Ockbrook, near Derby, April 21. 1826.

"DEAR MADAM,

"Applications like yours are so often made to me, that I can seldom comply with them. You, however, appear

to have been so much in earnest to obtain your suit, that I could not find in my heart entirely to refuse it. If the annexed lines will in any degree meet your wish on a subject so utterly exhausted of any possibility of new or affecting illustration, I shall be very glad.

"I am at this place on a visit to my brother for a few days, which must account for the date of the present communication, instead of Sheffield, my usual abode.

"I am truly,

"Your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss Dickenson, Workington, Cumberland."

Epitaph.

"Peace to the man of peace! his name,
Illustrious once, in humble fame,
Soon like himself must die;
Yet, in the book of life enrolled,
That name, when Time's last hour is told,
Shall sun and stars outvie.

"His spirit, numbered with the blest,
Rejoices where the weary rest,
The prisoners find release;
He led below the life of love,
That life is perfected above;
Peace to the man of peace!"

The original copy of the "Three Marys"* is dated there. Among many other proofs of her uncle's affection we have the following lines, addressed —

"To my Niece, Harriet Montgomery, of Ockbrook.

"There is a Book in Heaven, begun
When Sin and Death had birth,
In which are written, one by one,
The names redeemed from earth.

* Original Hymns, LIII.

"Nor will the Volume be complete,
Till Christ hath trodden down
Sin, Death, and Hell beneath his feet,
And won his perfect crown:

"The crown of his eternal love,
With living jewels bright,
His saints, *once* darkness, but *above*,
Transformed to marvellous light.

"Your name be entered in that Book;
And in that diadem,
On you may Jesus love to look,
As on a chosen gem:

"A gem to which the world had nought
So precious in his view!
Behold at what a price 'twas bought—
He gave *Himself* for *you*."

Mr. Holland, having in the press a History of Worksop*, asked the poet to favour him with a motto for the title-page. He at once kindly complied by writing on the proof-sheet the following lines:—

"'Time which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments.'—Sir Thomas Brown, on 'Urn Burial.'

"Thousands, ten thousands, on this spot of earth
Had lived and died ere we beheld the day;
Thousands, ten thousands, here shall spring to birth,
And live and die when we have passed away:
The dead, the living, the unborn shall meet,
When the last link hath made the chain complete,
And Death, the Grave, the World, all vanish at their feet.

"J. Montgomery, May 11. 1826."

* A town and parish in Nottinghamshire. The work (one vol. 4to.) was published this year.

We have already mentioned John Clare's verses written in imitation of the poets of the seventeenth century. When Montgomery printed them, he thought it so much less likely that his correspondent should himself be the author, than that they should have been transcribed from an old book, that he, some months afterwards, wrote to ask for further information, mentioning, at the same time, his own project of the "Christian Poet." He received the following reply:—

John Clare to James Montgomery.

"Helpstone, May 8. 1826.

"My dear Sir,

"I will lose no time in answering your letter, for I was highly delighted to meet so kind a notice from a poet so distinguished as yourself; and if it be vanity to acknowledge it, it is, I hope, a vanity of too honest a nature to be ashamed of—at least I think so, and always shall. But your question almost makes me ashamed to own to the extent of the falsehood I committed; and yet I will not double it by adding a repetition of the offence. I must confess to you that the poem is mine, and that the book from whence it was pretended to have been transcribed has no existence (that I know of) but in my invention of the title. And now that I have confessed to the crime, I will give you the reasons for committing it. I have long had a fondness for the poetry of the time of Elizabeth, though I have never had any means of meeting with it, farther than in the confined channels of Ritson's 'English Songs,' Ellis's 'Specimens,' and Walton's 'Angler;' and the winter before last, though amidst a severe illness, I set about writing a series of verses, in their manner, as well as I could, which I intended to pass off under their names, though some whom I professed to imitate I had never seen. As I am no judge of my own verses, whether they are good or bad, I wished to have the opinion of some

one on whom I could rely; and, as I was told you were the editor of the 'Iris,' I ventured to send the first thing to you, with many 'doubts and fears.' I was happily astonished to see its favourable reception. Since then I have written several others in the same style, some of which have been published; one in Hone's 'Every Day Book,' on Death, under the name of Marvel; and some others, in the 'European Magazine;' 'Thoughts in a Churchyard,' the 'Gypsy's Song,' and a 'Farewell to Love.' The first was intended for Sir Henry Wooton; the next for Tom Davies; the last for Sir John Harrington. The last thing I did in these forgeries was an address to Milton, the poet, under the name of Davenant. And as your kind opinion was the first encouragement and the last I ever met with from a poet to pursue these vagaries or shadows of other days, I will venture to transcribe them here for the 'Iris,' should they be deemed as worthy of it as the first were by your judgment, for my own is nothing.* I should have acknowledged their kind reception [sooner] had I not waited for the publication of my new poems, the 'Shepherd's Calendar,' which was in the press then, where it has been ever since, as I wish, at its coming out, to beg your acceptance of a copy, with the other volumes already published, as I am emboldened now to think they will be kindly received, and not be deemed intrusive, as one commonly fears while offering such trifles to strangers. I shall also be very happy of the opportunity in proving myself ready to serve you in your present undertaking; and could I light on an old poem that would be worth your attention, 300 or even 1000 lines would be no objection against my writing it out; but I do assure you I would not make a forgery for such a thing, though I suppose now you would suspect me; for I consider in such company it would be a crime, where blossoms are collected to decorate

* The stanzas were printed in the "Iris" of May 16. 1826.

the 'Fountain of Truth.' But I will end, for I get very sleepy and very unintelligible.

"I am, my dear Sir,

"Yours, very sincerely and affectionately,

"JOHN CLARE.

"Mr. Montgomery, Sheffield."

May 15. As usual, Montgomery took an active part in the Anniversary of the Sheffield Sunday School Union; recalling especially to the minds of the assembled teachers the past services and present mission of their patron, Mr. Bennet. In detailing the case of a mother in one of the South Sea Islands, who, after hearing the "glad tidings" of the gospel, wept that the missionaries had not arrived sooner to prevent her from murdering her own child, the poet was so overcome with emotion that he had to sit down, the large audience evidently participating in his feelings. The large work which he afterwards composed from the memoranda of Mr. Bennet and his colleague, records numerous cases of child-murder in those islands.

James Montgomery to his Nieces.

"Sheffield, June 11. 1826.

"MY DEAR BETSY AND HARRIET,

"I suppose you are now at Margate, and, as I cannot visit you in any other way, I come to you in spirit, and appear to you on paper, just to tell you that the afflictions under which you are each of you suffering have excited the deepest sympathy towards you, and solicitude that all may be well with you soon, as I humbly, fervently, and believingly pray every day, and many times a day (for I cannot think of you without praying in my mind), that all may be well with you at last, both in this world and that which is to come. Now that you will have leisure from the hurry and disturbance of business, that surrounds you at

home with many cares and concerns of this life, I entreat you, my dear, dear nieces, that you will employ some portions — a little at a time — of every day in reading the New Testament, especially the four Gospels, and more particularly that of *St. John*, in which you will find refreshment for your minds, when you are languid; comfort for your spirits, when they are troubled; and peace for your souls, when you are willing to hear what our Saviour has done and suffered for you, to save you from sin and the consequences of sin. If you have a hymn book with you, that will afford you pleasing and instructive exercise of another kind. But, above all, pray, each for yourself, that God would bless you, and fulfil in you every purpose of his mercy for which He has sent your present trials. Though you have been wonderfully and graciously preserved from most of the evils of that world which lieth in wickedness around you, yet you know, and I am sure, too, that you feel that you are sinners and need repentance! Oh! it is a blessing, beyond all the mere enjoyment of good things under the sun, to *know that we are sinners*, and that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners!* He came to seek and to save the lost. He came to seek and to save *you*. Oh! may He find you now, and rejoice over you, as *He* only *can* rejoice, who knows the value of a soul, having paid the price of yours with his own most precious blood! But, if you can find freedom, *pray together*, in your own simple language, and your prayers will be answered, for the Holy Spirit will help your infirmities, and, I trust, will witness with your spirits that you are born of God, when the love of God shall be shed abroad in your hearts. Do not think I write in this manner to distress you; — no, no; these are words of peace; they are good tidings of great joy to those who believe them; and oh! may the Lord open your hearts to welcome his message of salvation! . . . Kind remembrance to all at Woolwich.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mrs. Edmund Foster."

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Sheffield, June 14. 1826.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I write to say that I *cannot* write to you. Mr. Holland, the good man and true, by whom this scrawl will be delivered, will tell you how I am in the toils of a subscription for the distressed workmen, and in greater distress, perhaps, than any one of them from want of companions to help me to help them. Be this as it may, I must thank you under my own hand for your hospitality to me at Manchester, and for all the kind trouble you have taken upon yourself to procure materials for my 'Christian Poet.' I have nearly finished the rough copy, and hope, as soon as I can find 'space to breathe, how short soever,' to begin with the fair one, which will not take much labour, though it will require much exactness, as it consists principally of references to about a hundred volumes, containing millions of lines — waggon loads of chaff and straw, with here and there a grain of gospel truth in genuine poetry. The winnowing has been no small nor brief toil. It is astonishing how little genuine poetry of any sort there is amidst all the mass that is called by the name, and published as the works of the most celebrated geniuses which this island ever produced. Till you come to *assay* the standard, you would not believe how disproportioned the alloy is to the pure gold. I return the two very curious tracts published at Manchester from old manuscripts, from which I have gleaned a verse or two; also Ames's three volumes, from which I have got no more. However, five lines repay the trouble of tumbling over five hundred leaves, and glancing down the pages. I must not forget your Lion, if he has not broken loose, or, which is more likely, died of famine in these hard times; the latter I rather think was impossible, it not being given even to lions to die more than once in this world; and, as dead lions are not apt to walk, the former cannot have been the case. If, then, you have not otherwise disposed of him, and can contrive to forward him (that is, if

you remain in the same mind respecting his future destiny) in some safe package, that shall not be too expensive, — for a lion's skin, as well as a bear's, may be bought too dear, — I am sure our Literary and Philosophical Society will most thankfully receive him, and find him room, as your representative, among themselves, whenever their learned body assembles. We will readily defray any expense of packing which you may think moderate. — Yesterday I was wise enough to venture life and limb amidst an election crowd in the very wake of Lord Milton. Of course I was almost cast away in the straits between the Tontine Inn and Paradise Square. I thought I had escaped till I got safe home, and then I found that I had *not* done so, having sprained my ancle in such a manner that I can hardly walk. I assure you I did *not* write this with the lame foot, though appearances are in favour of such a supposition, it is so wofully penned. Kindest regards to Mrs. Everett.

"I am truly, your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. James Everett, Manchester."

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, Aug. 16. 1826.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"From the hurry and anxiety of preparation for a journey to Harrogate, I snatch a few moments to flee over land and ocean, — as I may do without the slightest interruption, though I cannot cross the room in which I am sitting without an effort of mind and limb, — to meet you, wherever you are at this time, in spirit, and whenever you arrive at the place to which this is directed, to meet you again on paper. The latter occasion, I hope, will be when you arrive at your last stage before embarking, *for good and all*, for Old England once more. At the Cape of Good Hope, then, and for the last time probably, such an interview will occur; I therefore gladly assure you, of what you know by your own feelings, that absence cannot lessen the sincere affection of long-enjoyed and long-tried Christian friend-

ship; and if absence in this world cannot do it, where we have but the possibility of meeting again to encourage us to cherish the remembrance of those with whom we once took sweet counsel, and walked to the house of God in company, — absence from the body, when to be so absent is to be present with the Lord, cannot disunite those who are one in heart with Him, though death stand between them. Therefore, whether we ever see other's face in the flesh any more or not, if we continue in *his* love, where *He* is *we* shall be: and can they be separated from each other who are at once and for ever with the Lord? — Your last letter, from the Eastern Archipelago, showed me that, as you have turned the point from which the sun sets out to visit us, your heart feels the attraction of your native land stronger and stronger, and the sweetness of home-sickness grows more and more overpowering and bewildering, till the pain and the pleasure can scarcely be distinguished; the latter, however, I trust, as you come nearer and nearer, will gain the ascendancy, and, at the place where this may meet you, I trust you will find yourself indeed arrived at the Cape of Good Hope, after all the tempests and trials, by land and water, which you have encountered on your missionary circumnavigation. One thing grieves us, which appears also to be a source of peculiar grief to you, — that so many of our packets miscarry. I can truly sympathise with you in the desolation of heart which you experienced on the coast of China, in the river of Canton, where the truth as it is in Jesus is proscribed; where, by the decree of a man whose breath is in his nostrils, on every forehead of every native this inscription seemed to be branded — 'To me the gospel must never be preached.' And there to find no letter from England, no introduction from Dr. Morrison, — this, after coming from the islands of the South Seas, where 'glory to God in the highest,' &c. is singing from shore to shore, as if Christ were new-born among the people who sat in darkness there, — this must have gone through your soul like a sword of ice, wounding, and chilling, and deadening, where it pierced Faith, Hope, and Charity

themselves in your bosom. But it is discouraging to us to send out our messengers from time to time, we know not whither, in the hope that one or two may not miscarry. This shuts our hearts and restrains our hands when we write, not knowing for whose eyes the lines may be destined. All the public affairs of this neighbourhood you will learn from the newspaper; and from these you will find that the number of old familiar faces is diminishing: many you will never see again; and those you do, will not appear as they once did; but though the fashion of the features is daily changing for the worse to the eye, you will not find that affections have thus declined; they renew their youth, like the eagle, with every opportunity of writing to or hearing from the beloved and the absent. . . . You are often inquired after by persons whose names I know not.

"Once more, your faithful friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

CHAP. LXI.

1826—1827.

MONTGOMERY GOES TO HARROGATE. — REV. J. W. CUNNINGHAM. — FOUNTAINS ABBEY. — EPITAPH ON CAPTAIN HEWITSON. — LOCAL DISTRESS. — ELLIOTT CRESSON. — "VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD." — LETTER TO J. BLACKWELL. — TO J. EVERETT. — "ZEMBA AND NILA." — MONTGOMERY ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY. — LINES. — LETTER TO JOSEPH ROWNTREE. — TO JOSEPH ASTON. — TO MISS ASTON. — "PELICAN ISLAND." — ITS ORIGIN AND PROGRESS. — THE PELICAN.

In the month of August he went to Harrogate, as intimated in the preceding letter. This visit was rendered very pleasant, in consequence of his meeting with the Rev. J. W. Cunningham, the vicar of Harrow *, in company with whom and an agreeable party, he made an excursion to Fountains Abbey, a memento of which exists in a bit of passing pleasantry, in prose and rhyme, in Montgomery's handwriting, and entitled "A True Copy of a Certain Record, discovered in the Neighbourhood of Fountains Abbey, August 30. 1826."

In September, 1826, Captain Hewitson perished in the ship "Town," of Ulverston, which was wrecked in the Mersey; but his body was brought to shore by the tide at Liverpool, where he was buried, and a plain monument erected to his memory by his brother mariners: it contains the following lines from Montgomery's pen: —

* At whose request he composed the verses on Mark xv. 30.— "'He saved others,' scorners cried," &c.—*Orig. Hymns*, CXXV.

"Weep for a seaman, honest and sincere, —
Not cast away, but brought to anchor here;
Floods had o'erwhelmed him, but the guilty wave
Repented, and resigned him to the grave;
In harbour, safe from shipwreck, now he lies,
Till Time's last signal blazes in the skies;
Refitted in a moment, then shall he
Sail from this port on an eternal sea."*

The great leisure which the disposal of his newspaper had given him for public service of another kind, was largely drawn upon in the course of this year, by his active participation in local efforts to relieve the distressed poor, especially the workmen engaged in the staple trades of the town and neighbourhood of Sheffield. These labours commenced with a public meeting of the inhabitants, held at the Town Hall, in the month of June; and did not terminate till the 16th of No-

* The following lines appear to have been intended by Montgomery for a seaman's epitaph. We do not know under what circumstances they were composed; but they have never before appeared in print.

"We commit thee to the deep,
Breathless form of mortal dust;
Sleep in peace, in Jesus sleep,
Till the rising of the just;
Then from ocean's midnight bed,
Like the morning lift thine head;
Meet thy Saviour in the air,
Meet thy parted spirit there.
Though no shrine of sculptured pride
Decks the wilderness of waves,
On the fluctuating tide
Though no flatt'ring hand engraves
Love's lament in deathless rhyme,
Claiming, to the end of time,
Gentle sighs and generous tears
From the passing mariners."

vember, when the committee made a report, which was drawn up by Montgomery, in which it is "assumed that not less than *ten thousand men, women, and children, in great distress*, had been benefited by the distribution" of the alms of the charitable at this trying crisis. Nor did our friend find this merely a "labour of love," — benevolence on the part of the giver, and gratitude on the side of the receiver; the misconceptions of both had to be corrected, or their unreasonable desires met, by verbal or printed explanations, which it generally fell to his lot to make.

Early in December, Mr. Elliott Cresson, a gentleman from the United States, visited England, as a representative of the parties who were then projecting the free negro settlement of Liberia. Being in Sheffield, he sought an interview with Montgomery, to whom he explained a scheme, which few of the abolitionists received without, at least, some degree of mistrust. He was particularly solicitous to obtain the autograph of the poet, who wrote for him the following lines in a book which bore on its cover this inscription — "A Mother's Gift:" —

"'A mother's gift!' in what sweet way
Such kindness shall a son requite? —
That is no easy thing to say;
But hark ye — give her *black* for *white*.

"Though from her lonely hand to you,
Unsoiled as new-fall'n snow it came,
Return it written through and through,
At once another and the same.

"Where all was blank and still before,
Let friends their cordial tributes bring,
Patriots their fervent feelings pour,
Young ladies paint, and poets sing.

"So may the mother with delight
On these transfigured pages look;
So be the son, in her dear sight,
Improved by travel, like the book.
"Sheffield, 1826."

Having to attend one or two religious anniversaries at Whitby in December, he determined to go afterwards for a few days to Scarborough; the snow lying deep on the ground, and himself, apparently, the only visitor in that fashionable locality at this ungenial season. The ocean, however, — which he had rarely seen without some interpretation of its voice, — was again suggestive; and he composed, while walking on the beach, the verses entitled a "Voyage round the World."* The "Stranger and his Friend"† were written at the same time and place.

* Works, p. 323. Captain the Hon. H. Keppel, in his vindication of Mr. Brooke, the Rajah of Sarawak, from the charge of cruelty to Malay pirates brought against him by Mr. Hume in the House of Commons, quotes these triplets as evidence of the popularly bad character of the Indian archipelago: —

"Glide we through Magellan's Straits,
Where two oceans ope their gates —
What a spectacle awaits!

"See, the vast Pacific smiles
Round ten thousand little isles,
Haunts of violence and wiles!"

That the last line truly indicated what *was* "a world of piratical outrage and commercial peril," few persons will deny; and still fewer, it is to be hoped, will admit that this is "an age in which the poet should find only a revolting paradox where nature has been lavish of the sublime and beautiful."— Keppel's *Visit to the Indian Archipelago*, 1853. We know that "the poet" *did* participate in the interest and satisfaction which were generally felt by the British public in the expedition and conduct of Mr. Brooke.

† Works, p. 232.

James Montgomery to John Blackwell.

"Bell Inn, Scarborough, Dec. 18. 1826.

"DEAR SIR,

"Please to send the 'Iris' to me, according to the address above written, to-morrow forenoon, and I shall receive it the following morning. I have not seen a newspaper since I left home; but have heard of wars and rumours of wars, without being able to make out any coherent story. I really do not know whether we may not be engaged in hostility with all the Continent, or whether we are, as I left the world when I was last in it, at peace everywhere, except one with another, — for I just now recollect that I left the Shakspeare Club and the editor of the 'Iris,' and his correspondent 'Spectator,' just in the state in which I imagine England, and Spain, and Portugal must be. If Miss Gales does not order me home by return of post, pray let me hear how you are going on in this new kind of belligerency, to which your stars, in placing you in my shoes (as at once the archer and the mark, to shoot at everybody, and be shot at in return by all), have exposed you. I have been very unwell, for the most part, since I left Sheffield, and, in consequence, so miserable in soul and body, that I have been ready to lie down and cry out, 'Oh! for a lodge in some vast wilderness!' . . . but I am much recovered this morning. I mention these impertinences merely because there are a few in Sheffield who have so much affectionate sympathy towards me as to wish to know *how* I am. Pray let the Misses Gales see this; they are better acquainted with my hand than you are, and may help you to read it.

"Believe me, your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Blackwell, 'Iris' Office, Sheffield."

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Sheffield, Dec. 31. 1826.

"My dear Friend,

"On my return from Whitby and Scarborough last Saturday, I found your kind letter among many others which I have been 'killing off' as briefly as possible; and the same *coup de grace* I must give to yours, instead of breaking it on the wheel limb by limb in a folio of three and a half pages, which it would otherwise have suffered, and which its merits richly required at my hands. Believe, that in my heart I have inflicted all that you could wish upon it; and all that my friendship and gratitude, and a hundred other good qualities which you know I possess, could bestow upon a letter from you, full of your cordial, ingenuous, and, let me add, enthusiastic good will towards one who has little claim upon your generosity of attachment.—I have to thank you for the money, 6*l.* 6*s.*, which balances the [printing] account between us; and 7*s.*, the produce, it seems, of a certain piratical publication of one of my small pieces,—'What is Prayer?'—which I should be happy to see pirated at every press in the kingdom, and for which I should never apply for an injunction from the Chancellor, even if thousands of pounds were realised to the spoilers of my property. I grudge nothing of the kind; but I do grudge what is wrung from me continually by the importunity of editors—original poetical contributions to their annuals and periodicals of different kinds, which are actually impoverishing me, because I have now a volume—and no small one—of such floating materials, here, there, and everywhere, except where it ought to be, namely, *in* a volume, with my name on the title-page. Such an one I have some faint hope of being able to produce next spring, containing a selection, at least, of these fugitives; but then the world, and the critics, and the fine ladies, will toss their heads in great style, and say, 'There's nothing new! We have seen it all before, and never wished to see any of it again!' There will, however, if I am able to accomplish it, be a leading piece

which they have neither seen before, nor anything like it; but, for that very reason, it is a million to one that nobody will know whether to like it or not, till the cry is set up one way or the other, and the poem may be hooted down by owls because they cannot by twilight see how it looks by daylight; and without good daylight I am sure it will not, it cannot, be seen to just advantage. I am obliged to conclude.

"Believe me truly, your friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. James Everett, Manchester."

He printed, in one of the "Annuals,"* the "Adventures of a Star," already mentioned, and contributed to a volume, called the "Negro's Friend," a poem of upwards of one hundred and fifty lines, entitled "Zemba and Nila, an African Tale," originally published in the "Whisperer." These rhymes — which might, we think, without any impropriety have been included among the "Narratives" in his collected works — exhibit, in comparison with their original structure, a curious and instructive illustration of the way in which, as we have elsewhere remarked, a careful poet applies his mature skill to the recasting of an early composition. Whatever may be alleged of the cleverness or even the perfection of some pieces that may have been struck out at a heat, and never afterwards retouched, the praise of such achievements is more likely to mark the early than the late triumphs of true genius in any art.

* The importunity of solicitation was sometimes seconded by large pecuniary bribes to induce him to write for these works, once so popular: indeed, such was the anxiety of the editors of some of them at this period to obtain contributions from men of note in literature, that Moore says the editor of the "Keepsake" thrust 100*l.* into his hands as the price of one hundred lines of poetry! Perhaps to some persons this offer and the poet's rejection of it will appear equally remarkable.

1827.

Jan. 5. Montgomery was again elected president of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society; and on the evening of February 16th he delivered, before a large audience, the Lecture on the Character and Developments of the Negro and Hindoo in connection with Phrenology, already mentioned; and which, in its enlarged and more demonstrative form, was not allowed to pass without public animadversion from some of the more zealous disciples of Gall and Spurzheim.

At the request of the Rev. Robert Newstead, missionary from Ceylon, he wrote the lines "On the Death of Joseph Butterworth, Esq., an exemplary Christian Patriot and Philanthropist,"* who died June 30. 1826.

Feb. 19. Under this date we find the following lines in a lady's album:—

"The naked, rugged rock contains
Gold, silver, jewels in its veins;
Blank are these pages, friends, but you
May find them richer than Peru.
Treasures of thought in darkness lurk,
Whene'er you set your pen to work:
Use but that little tool with skill,
Its point will turn up what you will:
O give the precious hoards to light;
The owner's heart will bless the sight,
And wish you all, with peace and health,
The earnest of eternal wealth,—
That pearl of price which whoso buys,
Though he sell all he hath, is wise."

* Works, p. 354.

James Montgomery to George Rowntree.

"Sheffield, Feb. 28. 1827.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I lately received a kind letter from your sister Elizabeth, and should have addressed this sheet of paper to her, if I had not thought it probable that she may be at Scarbro'. She inquires respecting my health since my return from the northern expedition, which I had the hardihood to undertake in the depth of winter, and the penalty of which I had to pay in great depression both of mind and body during my absence. I have had one very severe cold since the present year came in; but otherwise I have been as well as the sharp weather would let me be. I never *can* like cold, and frost, and snow,—except when they are gone, and then I don't care how long they remain on the hills of memory, which they make very picturesque and poetical. But commend me to commonplace weather, such as you may have on any day in the year in this variable climate, at mid-winter or midsummer, and at either of the equinoxes — air which I can breathe, sunshine which I can feel as well as see, and showers in which I am not afraid of being wet to the skin — on my face and my hands. Your sister mentions my little piece of the 'Stranger and his Friend.' She will not feel less interest in it when I tell her that, except the first verse (composed in the dark in the coach on the morning that I set out from Sheffield to York), the sketch was written with pencil on a scrap of blank paper which I found in my pocket, while I was travelling alone in a chaise from Whitby to Scarborough, on that tempestous Saturday, ten days before Christmas. These rough stanzas, so inspired by 'vapours, clouds, and storms,' on the wild and melancholy moors along that lofty coast, were afterwards painfully, yet pleasantly, elaborated in my walks during the short stay which I made at Scarborough; and I shall never forget the accomplishment of the fourth verse, on the height of Oliver's Mountain, on a gloomy, threatening afternoon, which naturally made me anticipate the horrors of such a

night as is there described.* I have to ask pardon for my seeming neglect of the hospitality which was offered to me both in going and returning from York; but if you knew how wretched a creature I am at times, especially when harassed and exhausted with travelling, you would be sure that my declining to accept your good offices was anything rather than unkindness or ingratitude. Remember me kindly to your sisters, brother, parents, Mrs. Allis, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander, and believe me,

"Ever truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Rowntree, Pavement, York."

James Montgomery to Joseph Aston.

"Sheffield, Feb. 22. 1827.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have as little deserved that you should suppose I was offended at you, as you have deserved that I should take offence. My only fault, it seems, is my silence; *that* can soon be explained—whether it can be justified, is another question. Well, then, you have only just the same complaint to make against me, that every other friend I have in the world may make. When I am absent, I never write a letter that I can fairly avoid now-a-days; because, in truth, I am oppressed and harassed with miscellaneous correspondence which I *cannot* escape, and which is often accompanied by such tasks for my mind, that my eye recoils and my hand shrinks instinctively from a blank sheet of letter paper; and nothing can exceed the repugnance with

---

* "'Twas night: the floods were out—it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;
I heard his voice abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof:
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest,
Laid him on my own couch to rest,
Then made the hearth my bed, and seemed
In Eden's garden while I dreamed."—*Works*, p. 232.

which I launch my pen upon such an unknown sea, except the pleasure with which I drop anchor with it at the bottom of the third page,—for I seldom put into port sooner,—and jump on shore while I fold it up in all the joy of freedom. It was quite otherwise when you and I were correspondents thirty years ago. I was then young, and ardent, and devoted rather to suffer than to lie still; I had abundance of surplus feelings, and thoughts, and imaginations, which I was delighted to disburthen to a faithful friend, who I was sure would read them with as much enthusiasm as I wrote. I have gone through many labours, and trials, and afflictions in the plain prose of human life since that time; and the poetry of my heart has been blighted and withered in the cold mildews and dry blasts which have gone over me since I was an inhabitant of the world of romance. This is very much like frenzy, you will say; there is, however, truth, implied if not expressed, in it, and truth which I have no power to communicate in ordinary words, and which I would not communicate if I could; for it is connected in me with that bitterness which the heart keeps to itself, and with which even a friend cannot altogether sympathise. In a word, I have lived so long, and have been carried by the flood of events to a situation which exposes me to the honour and misery of being deemed by many people a much greater, better, wiser man than I am; and consequently I must pay the price in the sacrifice of time, talents (such as they are), feeling, and peace of mind, for such distinction. The effect is, that I can do very little for myself; my spirits are exhausted with business to which I am compelled either by a sense of duty, or imperious necessity,—not having learnt to say *no*,—so that when I have an hour of leisure, I am out of tune, and sit down in sadness and despondency, thinking that I live almost in vain, if not worse than in vain, and that the little strength I have I spend for nought. During the last four months I have been attempting, in lucid intervals, to compose a leading poem for a volume of fugitive pieces, which I have, flying about the kingdom in all directions; yet, hitherto, I have found it the hardest task

of the kind I ever undertook, and of the success I cannot form an idea, indeed, hardly a hope; the theme, the plan, the manner are altogether so different from any of my preceding works. In the progress of it I have felt all the disadvantages of the hurry and vexation of daily engagements in which I live. I scarcely know how it has been produced; for I cannot say that I have spent one hour at a time of close application. But I must be brief. . . . I have not written to you, because I had no occasion, that is, no compulsion: I write now because I have both. If you can imagine for a moment that I have wilfully slighted you, or wronged your friendship, after this, I must say that you will wrong mine: I am to you what I ever was—a grateful friend. . . . Give my kindest regards to Mrs. A.; and, assuring you of my unchanged and unchangeable sentiments of affection,

"I am your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Joseph Aston, 'Recorder' Office, Rochdale."

The foregoing was, we believe, the last letter addressed by Montgomery to his old friend, who died at Chadderton Hall, near Manchester, 1843, at the ripe age of eighty-two years. Some time afterwards one of his daughters, being on a visit at Sheffield, called on the poet, who made an affecting and somewhat anxious allusion to the early and unreserved correspondence which had been carried on between her father and himself, and which, it appeared, was still in existence. Miss Aston not only quite understood the drift of the remarks thus incidentally made to her, but so justly and generously interpreted their force, that immediately on her return home she transmitted to the Mount the whole of the documents in question, for which she received the following acknowledgment:—

James Montgomery to Miss Aston.

"The Mount, Sheffield, Jan. 8. 1844.

"DEAR MISS ASTON,

"You have done me an act of kindness, the value of which I can better appreciate by the gratitude which I feel for it than express to you in words. I thank you from my heart for voluntarily, honourably, and most delicately presenting me with the volume of manuscript letters, formerly addressed by me to your late beloved and venerated father. For certain reasons, which I ventured to hint to you when I had the pleasure of seeing you here, I had often longed to have an opportunity of reading over (if in existence, as I doubted not they were, from the attachment subsisting for nearly half a century between us) the early portions at least of my communications to him during the most perilous and painful period of my life, when, from external circumstances, especially the persecutions to which I was exposed for imputed political heterodoxy, and, moreover than these, the conflicts in my own mind on subjects of far more importance than any affairs of this life, I was harassed almost to despondency concerning my state before my Creator, Redeemer, and Judge, from having forsaken that communion of his people among whom I had been born and trained up in his nurture and admonition. Now, your father for several years of this sore trial having been the only friend with whom I could freely correspond, my letters to him were so purely personal and confidential, that they were the very last disclosures of my soul that I could consent ever to be made public; and yet, without my consent, it was possible they might be ferreted out by some officious but indiscreet person desirous of honouring my memory, and given by him as recovered treasures to the world, which, *as a world*, could not understand the spirit in which they were written, and would despise them as puerile effusions of a morbid and hypochondriacal young man, ignorant of life, of himself, and of human nature in our artificial state of society. The utmost hope, therefore, after your friendly call, that I presumed to

cherish, was that some time or other I might have courage to ask permission to see the volume, and trust to your ingenuous and candid disposition, in such a case, to preserve from rude violation or exposure relics so peculiar from the very events, both public and private (in reference to myself) of the years in which these epistles were penned, and which would not only render many passages and allusions to persons and things of a bygone age scarcely intelligible, but exceedingly liable to be misrepresented or misunderstood by readers of a later generation. Your packet, containing the whole of these, was a most unexpected and welcome gift, though, as no line of explanation accompanied it, I could not guess on what conditions I was entrusted with the enclosure. I was not less affected than surprised by the discovery. I felt then, and feel now, that to me it was a providential blessing which placed (in some measure), as far as the matter goes, my credit in my own hands, to secure it from being inconsiderately hazarded by imprudent use being made of the confessions of a heart only too ready to pour out its troubles and complaints into a congenial bosom. Except a few phrases on religion, I find nothing to disavow. For your kindness, and as the daughter of a worthy parent, and once my dearest friend, I am glad to subscribe, truly,

"Your much obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss Aston, Chadderton Hall, near Oldham."

We have already adverted to Montgomery's solicitude about the correspondence in question in an early portion of this work; and from the selections which we have printed, the reader will have been enabled to judge for himself, not merely of their interest as illustrative of the mind and feelings of the writer at a critical period of his history, but perhaps to decide how far, or whether at all, their publication in these pages was justifiable on any ground. On this point, the strong terms in one part of the foregoing letter

appear to demand a few words of explanation. In the first place, then, we never saw or knew anything of the contents of the letter to Miss Aston, until long after our extracts from that section of the correspondence about which the poet expresses solicitude were in print; but had it been otherwise, our course was sufficiently justified, for, in the second place, Montgomery himself, after having obtained the letters under the circumstances described above, gave them, with his own hand, to the writer of this paragraph, undoubtedly with a full consciousness of the use that would be made of them; and, thirdly, — to say nothing of any apprehension, well or ill-grounded, which he might happen to entertain, that the letters would be turned to sinister account, if they fell into some hands,—it must be remembered that, while personal feeling must and generally ought to be the sole rule of action in dealing with such documents during the lifetime of the writer, obvious propriety and universal practice have sanctioned a different principle in the biography of a deceased individual—the exercise of discretion.

March 31. Mr. Holland called upon Montgomery in the Hartshead, and found him apparently feverish and excited, and evidently engaged upon some subject which painfully absorbed his attention. There was a folded circular letter lying on the table, which he had not seen. He took it up—read it—then threw it down, saying, rather peevishly, "No, I won't"—meaning, that he would not attend the meeting to which it invited him. He had, he said, received not fewer than twelve solicitations of a similar kind within the last four days; and he really could not, if he would, attend to them. He presently became more placid, telling his friend that he might then divulge to him the title of a forthcoming poem, which was so nearly completed

that he had written to Longmans on the subject, and was now near the conclusion of the last canto. "You will be surprised," he added "when I tell you that it is entitled the 'Pelican Island.'" *Holland:* "I am alike surprised at the title, and unable to derive from it any distinct idea of the drift of the poem." *Montgomery:* "Probably so; and other persons will, no doubt, be equally at a loss in that respect: and yet it is an interesting subject, as I have treated it." *Holland:* "But how came you to adopt such an extraordinary theme?" *Montgomery:* "It has been floating in my mind several years — at least since 1818; about which period I think it was that I read the account which Captain Flinders gives, in his "Narrative of a Voyage to *Terra Australis*," of one of the numerous gulfs which indent the coast of New Holland, studded with small islands which appeared to have been the haunts of pelicans during many generations, through which the birds had been hatched, lived, and died, as unseen as they had been unsung by man. Impressed as I was with the subject, I thought it would do very well for the foundation of a missionary speech, and serve to illustrate the manner in which the heathen on the adjacent islands had been born, grown up, and perished as ignorant of God, and of all that is good, as we were ignorant of them, and of their neighbours the pelicans. I tried the subject once in this way*; and then it struck me that it would make a good subject for a poem of a couple of hundred lines. I therefore resolved that I would at some time work it up; but I was at a loss for a leading idea, until, when at Ockbrook last spring, I thought I had got a cue; but after com-

* A copy of the ample notes used by the speaker on that occasion is before us.

posing two or three stanzas*, I was dissatisfied both with the measure and the plan, and gave it up for the time. As I was returning to Sheffield from Scarborough last autumn, with my friend Mr. Hodgson, my attention was forcibly arrested by the singular appearance of the country about Thorp Arch, which was so completely flooded, that only a few of the more prominent points of ground were seen, like green islands amidst the lake.† By some involuntary association of ideas, I was powerfully reminded of the Pelican Island. In a moment the radical thought of which I had been so long in quest rushed into my mind; and I saw the whole plan of my poem from beginning to end. I immediately began the subject in blank verse; and by the time we reached Ferrybridge, I had composed a number of lines, which I wrote down with my pencil in the inn there‡; and from that time to the present I have laboured incessantly at the work, and now hope that its execution will be in some degree comparable to my conception of the subject." *Holland:* "I am scarcely

* The substance of the unsuccessful experiment alluded to is comprised in the following stanza, of which we have half a dozen versions:—

"Day followed day; from sun to sun,
Night round her world of beauty sailed;
Moon after moon a course begun
Of glory which as quickly failed;
While many a weary month went by
That waste of ocean, land, and sky."

† The scene alluded to in the text must have borne, in every way, far less resemblance to the reefs and lagoons of the Pacific than to the Halligs, or islands of the North Sea — "those grassy runes," as Hans Andersen calls them, "which bear testimony to a sunken country."— *True Story of my Life*, p. 220.

‡ This rudimental scrap, dated "Ferrybridge, Sept. 8. 1826," lies before us. It consists of thirteen lines, which, with several alterations, form the opening of the poem.

more surprised at the theme itself, than at the vehicle in which you have chosen to embody it: I think you never before published a line of blank verse; and I shall be curious to see which of the great masters in that style you have taken as your model—Milton, Young, Thomson, or Wordsworth." *Montgomery:* "I have imitated none of them: the versification is my own; or perhaps it rather resembles that of the dramatists, as admitting a great variety of pause and accent, with frequent double endings of the lines." *Holland:* "I confess I feel apprehensive that you have ventured upon a perilous experiment: there is a constant temptation, in the facility with which thought flows and expands in that form of verse, to become less exact, less condensed, than your previous elaborate structures of rhyme, and hence not equal to what your readers are justified in expecting." *Montgomery:* "I know what you mean; but that has not been my temptation: I have all along laboured to force as much thought into as few words as possible; and with this object I have written some passages over and over again several times: I had one section of fifty lines lying before me for three weeks, before I could finish it to my mind. I am sure I could have written the poem sooner and more easily in rhyme." *Holland:* "Well, sir, I wish your success may be at least proportionate to your pains: it seems to me that you will not only have to create the incidents of but an interest in the story, which must, after all, I should think, be unallied to human sympathy." *Montgomery:* "I foresaw all those difficulties from the beginning; and I think you will say I have surmounted them. I was aware that such objections as you mention would be urged; and therefore I forbore to consult or even mention my design to any one, until I had advanced suffi-

ciently to form my own opinion as to the effect of the poem as a whole: and I have kept my resolution. They did not know what I was about in the house: Sarah Gales found a few lines the other day; but she could make nothing of them; and if anybody had said at an earlier period only half of what you have just now said, I believe I should have been too disheartened to have proceeded."

The first pelican* ever seen by Montgomery — or indeed by persons in the provincial towns generally — was one exhibited in 1794 at Sheffield, by old Pidcock of Exeter-Change celebrity, and who described its rarity in terms which would now be thought extravagant if applied to the dodo. But however uncommon living specimens of the bird may have been previous to the above date in travelling menageries, by name or in engravings it has been known to the inhabitants of this country at least ever since the earliest translation of the Bible appeared, as it is there mentioned in three or four places; and it has been during fully as long a period a favourite with English poets, who have celebrated the fabulous notion of its feeding its young with its own blood, for this purpose puncturing its breast with its bill: a notion which the frequent appearance of the bird in menageries, and the prevalence of better views of natural history, but slowly dissipated. Old Joshua Sylvester, who classes the

* *Pelicanus onocrotalus*, as the bird is called by Linnæus, is found in most of the temperate regions of the globe. In May, 1663, one was shot on Horsey Fen, near Norwich, and was long in possession of the celebrated Sir Thomas Browne, of that city, who supposed it might have been one of the King's birds, which was missing from St. James's at that time. "But for this information," says his editor, "the pelican might probably have been added to our *Fauna*, on the authority of Dr. Browne."—*Works of Sir Thomas Browne, by S. Wilkin*, vol. iv. p. 318.

pelican with the stork among "Charitable Birds," says of the former, that she

> "Kindly for her tender brood
> Tears her own bowells, trilleth-out her blood
> To heal her young, and in a wondrous sort
> Unto her children doth her life transport:
> For, finding them by som fell serpent slain,
> She rents her breast, and doth upon them rain
> Her vital humour; whence, recovering heat,
> They by her death another life do get:
> A type of Christ," &c.*

With reference to the sudden and successful inspiration of the "Pelican Island," Montgomery not only truly expounded a conviction which every genuine poet must more or less frequently have felt, but probably alluded to his own particular experience, when he thus wrote:—"Poetic spirits seem to have seasons of intellectual revelation, when themes long meditated, and apparently meditated in vain, are suddenly presented in such a light, that thenceforward they have nothing to do but by long and patient labour to develop the inspired conceptions of a few moments." †

* Sylvester's "Du Bartas' 'First Day of the First Week.'" Dante alludes to the bird under this figure in his "Paradise." With the same meaning it is found rudely figured in the catacombs at Rome.

† Introductory Essay to "Pilgrim's Progress," p. xxxv.

CHAP. LXII.

1827.

MONTGOMERY AT OCKBROOK. — LETTER TO MR. EVERETT. — GIFT OF POEMS TO THE SERAMPORE MISSION COLLEGE. — THE "CHRISTIAN POET." — LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET. — PUBLICATION OF THE "PELICAN ISLAND."—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POEM. — BIBLE-SOCIETY TOUR IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND. — CONTROVERSY AT NEWCASTLE. — TESTIMONIAL TO MONTGOMERY. — LETTERS ON THE SUBJECT. — TOBAGO MISSION AND SILVER INKSTAND.

AMONG the "memorial days" which mark at intervals the progress of the ecclesiastical year among the Moravians, is the 12th of May, on which the congregations commemorate the "agreement to the first *orders* or *statutes*" of the Brethren, as promulgated at Herrnhut in 1727. The centenary celebration of this event led Montgomery to Ockbrook, where he spent a few weeks very pleasantly between the religious services of the festival, and his out-door walks in the finest season of the year.

James Montgomery to John Holland.

"Ockbrook, near Derby, May 10. 1827.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I have with difficulty found time to fulfil my promise to-day.* It means nothing now; but the fact means everything. I have been greatly engaged since I came hither, principally indeed with pen, ink, and paper; yet I

* This allusion is to the verses beginning, "Time grows not old with length of years."— *Original Hymns*, CCXXIII.

know no three things more unmanageable than these when they fairly take possession of hands, head, and heart, as they have lately done of mine, — sometimes, I fear, to little purpose, — again I hope. In truth, the weather within me — that is, the weather on the Pelican Island — much resembles this froward, stormy, winter-like spring, with gleams of sunshine, and now and then a breath of air that turns all to paradise — but Paradise Lost soon follows Paradise Found with me. Pray give my best remembrance to Mr. Blackwell; and tell Miss Gales I will write to her as soon as my burthen is a little lighter. Accept the sincere good wishes of

"Your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. John Holland, Sheffield Park."

During this visit he met with the Rev. J. D. Wawn, of Staunton Rectory, who, as a memento of the interview, asked the poet to write him a few lines on his "ancient church, the ruined arch, and the Hermit's Cave." Hence originated the two sonnets on "Dale Abbey," * which several months afterwards were transmitted to Mr. Wawn, with the remark, "I send you the annexed stanzas, the first line of which darted into my mind when the theme was suggested by you, but which found not a mate until a few mornings ago, when, being confined to bed, it lighted upon my pillow, and would not let my head alone till it had ferreted out nearly all the remainder now attached to it."

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Ockbrook, near Derby, May 10. 1827.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"The lion in his den duly arrived in Sheffield, and was safely delivered to the custody of the keeper of our

* Works, p. 361.

Museum, where I saw him a few minutes afterwards standing as majestically as the stuff of which his inside is made of would let him. The outside is admirable, though it is impossible not to lament the loss of so much of his mane. His teeth, however, and his jaws are left*; and if one cannot hear one may see him roar, which is better in a room appointed to literary and philosophical discussion, as his voice might be a very disturbing though magnificent accompaniment to our wranglings and readings. Your letter of introduction arrived after him; and, though I had heard from Mr. Wood, at Sheffield, that you had been poorly, I was pleased to hope that your silence respecting any extra illness was a proof that your indisposition had been only of an ordinary kind, and such as may be considered in season at the spring-time of the year. I do trust that you take care of your throat; and yet, I fear, not so much as you ought, for you threaten yourself with an expedition to Hull, where, I am sure, you will have no mercy on it. Now, if it would be sufficient for you to stand on the platform there, on a certain occasion, like your quondam lion in our debating room, and only roar to the eye, I should think you were acting wisely, if not speaking so: the latter, no doubt, you will do, though at the hazard of having to keep silence for a month afterwards. I should have been truly glad to have accompanied you and witnessed your performance, even if my ear had been delighted and my heart pained for fear of the consequences to yourself. Think of these things, but still do that which you find in your heart to do after your heart has taken counsel of your head.

"I have been at this place nearly three weeks on a visit to my brother, who was alarmingly seized, some time before Easter, with a paralytic affection; but, thank God, I believe he is quite recovered, and I think I never saw him look better since his great affliction was laid upon him. He and

* The cranium, which, as the only solid, turned out to be the only imperishable part of the animal, is now in the Sheffield Museum.

Agnes have repeatedly mentioned a kind visit which you made them from Derby, one rainy day, at the peril of your health. They both send their grateful remembrance to you, and will always be glad to bid you welcome when you come this way, but especially in fine weather, for your own sake.

"I take it for granted that our Literary and Philosophical Society voted you thanks for your royal gift to their Museum on Friday last,—I not being at home.

"A main purpose for which I have been staying here has been only very imperfectly carried into effect, namely, to finish my long poem of the 'Pelican Island,' which seems to have puzzled you and many others not a little on the first annunciation. Indeed I defy all the heads into which thoughts of poetry, or even poetic thoughts, ever came, to guess the plan or anticipate the issue, even while they are reading, before it is all developed; and yet nothing can be more simple, gradual, and natural, so far at least as I have proceeded, and up to the point at which I mean to stop,—which point, I may say almost literally, I expect to reach to-day, being within about ten lines of it! This indeed accomplishes only half of the original project; but it is perfect in itself, and needs no sequel: and should a sequel be attached hereafter, that also will stand sufficiently distinct to be an entire poem of itself, yet still an obvious and integral part of one whole, comprehending both the 'Pelican Island' and whatever its uncreated follower may be. I hoped by this time to have finished, not the rough copy only (which is all that I can do this week, I fear), but to have prepared the transcript for the press during my visit here; but I have been exceedingly unwell, and though I have laboured very diligently, I have proceeded so slowly that not a line of the revise has been written. The publishing season is now at its height in London; and if I make the best speed I can, I shall be just in time to be too late for availing myself of the tide to launch my new bark. But that will not break my heart; the poem must stand all weathers or sink. It is *blank verse!* Now if you do not look blank at that, you are like nobody else. The ex-

periment with me is new and perilous. Aware of that, and knowing that a look, a word, a motion of any friend's face, lip, or leg, might discourage me from proceeding, I determined not to communicate either my subject or the manner of casting it to any human being, till I had executed so much as to be past retreating, whatever doubts, fears, wishes, and hopes might be expressed by any kindhearted friend, who might pity my madness in going out of my packhorse line, with the jingling bells, and the whistling tune that they inspired as I hearkened and kept time to them. Till I thought I had arrived at the last canto, therefore, I kept my secret. Then I told it tremblingly, and put the first canto into the hands of one whose candour I durst confide in. Canto after canto was thus submitted to a most impartial censorship; and I can only say that, let the issue with the public be what it may, I know now that I have not utterly failed, and that I ought not to be sent to the treadmill for ignominiously employing my small talents, but that at least I deserve to be forgiven, if I have not so happily applied them in this way as I might in another. It will be dog days, I fear, before the work is published.

"Although after many delays, for which I am not answerable, I believe Mr. Collins, of Glasgow, will publish the 'Christian Poet' this month. I fear no dishonour there: I can conscientiously say that I have done the religious and the literary public some service by that compilation; and, laying aside all your friendly partiality, you will say so too when you have fairly examined its contents.

"On looking back, I find that I have forgot to say, though I was invited to Hull, I cannot go. Other engagements at Derby and Shrewsbury, in the same week, absolutely prevent me; or I should have been happy to see Hull again, and you there, who first tempted me thither. With kindest regards to Mrs. E., I am truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P.S. With regard to re-stuffing the lion, I thank you for the hint; but after finding the skin, which is all in such a

case, I cannot conscientiously propose the acceptance of a piece of gold to fill it up.

"To Mr. James Everett, Manchester."

Montgomery gave a set of his poems, each volume of which bore the following inscription: —

"To the Rev. Dr. Carey and the Rev. Dr. Marshman these volumes are respectfully presented, for the use of the Baptist Missionary College at Serampore, with the best wishes of the author, J. Montgomery. Sheffield, May 19. 1827."

Nearly coinciding with the foregoing date were three ex-tempore contributions to ladies' Albums: —

1. *Under some lines copied from a window-pane—*

"Faint lines on brittle glass and clear,
A diamond pen may trace with art;
But what the feeblest hand writes here,
Remains engraven on my heart:
Then write a word,—a word or two,
And make me love to think of you."

2. *The next is a playful response to a rhyming solicitation:—*

"Of your esteem give me a sample,
A line will be of worth untold;
In gifts *the heart* is all and ample;
It makes them worth their weight in gold."

Answer.

"Lady, I'll set a good example;
Accept of my esteem this sample;
I send 'a line,' and as it is the first,
To make it better,—may it be the worst."

3. "May all who here in spirit meet,
At the great supper take their seat;
Nor one among them, when the King looks round,
Without a wedding-garment then be found."

June 4. On Whit Monday, when Montgomery made his appearance on the platform at the meeting of the Sunday School Union, he put into the hands of Mr. Holland a copy of the "Christian Poet," which was just published. When he rose to speak, he read a letter from Mr. Bennet, in which that gentleman described his visit to Huaine, one of the South Sea Islands, where he found a large school with the "Royal Guards" parading in front; and, on entering, was still more surprised and gratified to find the king and queen learning to read and spell along with the lowest of their subjects! Upon such an incident it was easy to dilate, and the speaker did so in a very affecting manner. Mr. Holland and he left the meeting together, conversing, as they walked along, about the "Christian Poet," of the value of which the editor spoke more complacently than he usually did in such cases, on account of the rich poetical treat, thus rendered easily accessible, exhibiting, as most of the extracts did, piety and intellect, combined in specimens of verse, which comparatively few of the readers of such a volume would ever have met with in the original works of the authors who are respectively quoted. On passing a shop window, the poet suddenly stopped. *Montgomery:* "That is beautiful-looking tobacco: I want a little; but it is an article upon which I presume you can exercise no judgment?" *Holland:* "No, sir; and posterity will, no doubt, be a little surprised, should I ever take it by the button, and say, 'Mr. Montgomery was a smoker!'" *Montgomery:* "Posterity will care nothing about the matter: at all events, many better and greater men than myself have had recourse to the pipe, though I believe none of them ever used it more moderately than I have done." The list of notable men who have used tobacco would certainly be a long

if not a curious one: we at this moment recollect, as belonging to it, the names of Milton, Hobbes, Dr. Parr, Rev. Robert Hall, Burns, Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron, Campbell, Moore, Bloomfield, &c. &c.

The admirable "Introductory Essay" prefixed to the "Christian Poet" is one of the author's happiest efforts: it opens with a magnificent passage from Milton, descriptive of what "must be the highest of all arts, and require the greatest powers to excel in it, — that art is *poetry*, and the special subjects on which it is here exhibited as being most happily employed are almost all sacred." The leading intention of the compiler of this work, as well in his Essay as by his extracts, was to counteract the prejudice which not only sceptics and profligates, but many well-meaning people have entertained against the union of the two most excellent gifts which God has conferred on intelligent and immortal man, — "piety and poetry." "We are continually told," says he, "that religious subjects are incapable of poetic treatment. Nothing can be more contrary to common sense; nothing is more unanswerably contradicted by matter of fact. There are only *four* long poems in the English language that are often reprinted, and consequently better known and more read than any other similar compositions of equal bulk. *Three* of these are decidedly religious in their whole or their prevailing character, — 'Paradise Lost,' the 'Night Thoughts,' and the 'Task;' and, of the fourth, the 'Seasons,' it may be said, that one of its greatest charms is the pure and elevated spirit of devotion which occasionally breathes out amidst the reveries of fancy and the descriptions of nature, as though the poet had sudden and transporting glimpses of the Creator himself through the perspective of his works; while the crowning hymn of the whole is one of the

most magnificent specimens of verse in any language, and only inferior to the inspired original in the book of Psalms. . . . This fact ought for ever to silence the cuckoo note, which is echoed from one fool's mouth to another's (for many of the wise in this respect are fools), that religion and poetry are incompatible; no man in his right mind, who knows what both words mean, will ever admit the absurdity for a moment." *Montgomery:* "If there were no other example in our language, the poem entitled 'Christ's Victory and Triumph,' by Giles Fletcher, would be sufficient to clear religion and poetry alike from the slander cast upon them,—that they cannot be united without degradation to both." The main scope of the Essay is avowedly directed against the well-known dictum of Dr. Johnson, in his "Life of Waller," which in sum amounts to this, "that contemplative piety, or the intercourse between God and the human soul, cannot be poetical." The futility of the critical canon alluded to, especially if it be taken in any other than a very limited sense, is generally admitted not only to have been satisfactorily demonstrated in the argumentative portion of the volume, but to be conclusively illustrated by the metrical extracts from 150 authors; to which we may surely add, as most signally corroborative of his doctrine as to the compatibility of "the two most excellent gifts" of God, the better portion of Montgomery's own poems.

As might be expected, the volume received some improvement on being reprinted, and this was partly the result of hints from judicious friends. One of these, the Rev. James Tate, the justly esteemed master of the Grammar School at Richmond, in Yorkshire, suggested a very interesting addition to the brief notice of his deceased pupil Herbert Knowles, whose sweet little

poem of the "Three Tabernacles" has been universally admired.

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, Aug. 16. 1827.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Once more, and after a long interval, mountains open to meet you on the other side of the equator. Twelve months ago (on this very day, I find) I did indeed set out on the same expedition, and towards the very point at which I now aim, — the 'Cape of Good Hope,' but it was the 'Cape of Storms,' according to its ancient designation. I had made up a large packet of reports, papers, &c. concerning our local benevolent and Christian concerns here, and enclosed a letter, expecting that the whole would be forwarded in a cask of goods leaving Sheffield in a few days. I went from home immediately afterwards, and on my return found my cargo driven back by stress of weather, or, in plain terms, sent back by the merchant with a *query* whether there was a *letter* in it, as no letter could be thus forwarded without hazarding the forfeiture of all the goods that were in the cask with it. The time had gone by in my absence, and the books, &c. lie in my window, and the letter unopened in my desk at this hour.* I have been so discouraged by this misadventure, as well as the uncertainty of reaching you in any part of India, long as your sojourn has been there, that I determined to write no more till we could ascertain about what time you might arrive in South Africa. I calculate now that this epistle may have better fortune than its forerunner, and arrive in safety at its destination, as I shall send it by the regular post, the only conveyance on which dependence can be placed. I am not sure but I may yet have an opportunity of making up a parcel of pamphlets, &c. like the former, in time to furnish

* This letter was afterwards sent to Mr. B. Vide p. 180., antè.

you with entertainment on your homeward voyage. O, when will you set sail for the last time, after your hundred embarkations in as many different seas, with one long, swift, right-forward course to reach your native land,—that land which I am sure you have loved more and more, not only at every remove, as you went further and further from it, but more especially with accelerated impulse and power of affection on every stage as you drew nearer and nearer to it! O may He (the Angel of the Covenant) who has accompanied, and guided, and guarded you, so far as we have heard, and who I trust at this very moment is yet with you as a God *of the living* (for in this correspondence of spirits between the extremities of the globe, we know not whether we are addressing the living or the dead), may He continue to care for you in his providence, and to strengthen you with his grace, till you have finished your course—I mean your missionary course—with joy, and the work which He has given you to do in every place whither his own Spirit has led you, till He has brought you home to your 'father's house in peace,' and to the friends who long again to see your face in the flesh, and hear at large from your lips (what they read indeed with delight in your letters) what He hath done for you, and by you, and in you, since He called you away! Now the period of your voyage of mercy round the world appears so near, I begin to wish, but not repiningly, that I *had* been with you all the while, and seen, and suffered, and laboured, and rejoiced as you have done. But here I am, and here where I ought to be too; I am quite clear of that, unless I dreadfully deceive myself. I *once*, and *once only*, I may say, I believe, with truth, *was permitted to choose my own way;* I *chose wrong*, and had long, long ago, found death in the error of it, but a hand of mercy was upon me when I had no mercy on myself, and preserved me from destruction, as well as spared me, when Justice cried 'Strike!' and the arm of Omnipotence alone could stay the arm of vengeance. Since that fatal choice—fatal as refers to the folly and wretchedness of it, and the peril to which it exposed me—my whole course has been

manifestly one directed by Providence. I can trace every step; and I thank God that, in this respect, He took me early out of my own hands, and caused goodness and mercy to follow me thus far all the days of my life; even while I was an apostate and a rebel, as well as a fugitive from his presence, and an alien from his people. May every purpose for which I have been so preserved be eventually fulfilled, or it were better for me that I had never been born, or, having been born, that I had never known the way of truth, but been cast at my birth among the wildest savages whom you have seen, and perished without the knowledge of God, even under the wheels of Juggernaut's car! But I may return to less awful subjects. Since I last wrote to you, if I recollect rightly, I have twice appeared before the world—as a 'Christian Psalmist,' and as a 'Christian Poet.' I allude to two volumes of compilations of psalms and hymns, in the first instance, in which I deemed poetry and piety to be united, with a hundred original pieces of my own, which has been a very successful publication, something of the kind having long been wanted. The sequel, the 'Christian Poet,' had the same object in view, but comprehended pieces of a higher order, and laying claim to the genuine honours of verse, as the noblest vehicle of the noblest thoughts. This also promises to reward the spirited publisher, and, I may add, the laborious editor. Last week I assumed a new poetical shape, and came out as the author of the 'Pelican Island,' of which I can say no more than that it is in blank verse, and that, if I find opportunity, I shall be exceedingly happy to enclose a copy of each of these works, to 'kiss your hands' (as the Italians say) among the Hottentots. Since you last heard from me direct—though often by our friend, Mr. Hodgson, you hear from me indirectly, and not less affectionately—you have been informed that I have given up the newspaper and printing business. Of this I have never repented one moment: I am thankful, inexpressibly thankful, to that gracious Providence, which thus released me from a burthen which I could scarcely bear any longer. I cannot enter into particulars here. I was

enabled to dispose of this property on terms satisfactory to myself, and yet very easy to the person who succeeded me. It has also been a great relief to me from an anxiety which realised itself by being dreaded, that the concern in which he embarked has been thus far prosperously conducted. It would have made me miserable if he had failed at first; and I had fully made up my mind, if he did, to indemnify him, so far, at least, as to return him all the money he had paid me for copyright. That copyright, by the rivalry of the 'Independent,' I had considered as so precarious, that I reduced the amount of its estimated value one half to him, in comparison with what I had been offered in preceding years. Of course I am not rich,—I never took the means to be so; I have often said that I could not afford to pay the price of wealth; and that as there was neither a law of Nature nor an Act of Parliament to compel me to become rich, I would not sell all my peace of mind, nor consume my time in gathering what I might never enjoy. I do not despise money; I love it as much as any man ought to do, and perhaps something more at particular times; but a small provision is enough for my few wants, and the Lord has made that provision for me. I owe it all to Him; I cannot say that my skill, or industry, or merit of any kind has acquired it; I have received it as a free gift at his hands, and to Him I would consecrate it, and every other talent, as an unprofitable servant at the best, and too often as a slothful and wicked one. I live with Misses Gales, in the Hartshead, still; and shall never remove till Providence again changes my course. Of this there is little prospect, and I am resigned. Since the foregoing pages were written, I have secured a conveyance to South Africa for the books and pamphlets which I have mentioned already, by Messrs. Joseph Levick and Co., merchants at Cape Town. Mr. Levick, I think, is nephew to the Rev. W. Thorpe, of Bristol. These *miscellanea* will inform you respecting our Christian institutions here; and you will regret to learn that though there is a multiplication of number, there is a decline of means for the support, I believe, of every one of

them. The 'dissenting interest,' as you call it, is not flourishing here. The congregations in all the chapels, where I go occasionally, appear to me considerably thinner: many reasons might be assigned for this, but I will only mention one, which is perhaps the only good one,—the gospel is most faithfully preached in all our churches, and by all our church ministers. What I principally regret among your friends here is, that while the old ones necessarily fall off in vigour and zeal (I will not say in love), few, very few young ones come forward to supply their lack of service, or rather, the increased service, which requires all the energies and affections of both young and old in entire consecration to carry it on. There is as much *need* for your return to revive those whom you left behind, and who are still in the land of the living, as there was for your visitation to the missionaries all over the world, whither you have been. On this account, not less than from every personal motive referring to ourselves and to you, we long for your safe arrival among us, with all the added gifts and graces which you must have received in your various labours, and which perils as well as enjoyments, and reflection as well as experience, must have blessedly matured. There is no change among the Sheffield ministers of your denomination, I think, except that the Rev. J. Mather has just removed from Howard Street to Birmingham. Perhaps Mr. Jones was at the Baptist chapel when you went: Mr. Larum, a very useful preacher, and a speaker at our meetings, is pastor to that congregation now. What has happened to Carey and Marshman to separate themselves and their property from the Baptist Missionary Society? It may be a separation like that of Lot from Abraham; but I feel, at least, that it had better have been otherwise, so far as we short-sighted mortals can judge of everlasting issues.* And now, my dear friend, farewell! I cannot forget that you may be in eternity while I am writing; and if not, that I may be in eternity when you are reading what

* Vide Period. Accounts of Baptist Missions, 1826.

I write. Be then my last words the best that I utter for you, for myself, and for all whom we love,—the Lord bless us, and keep us, and bring us all to his heavenly kingdom.

"I am, most truly your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., of Sheffield;
care of Messrs. Joseph Levick and Co, Merchants,
Cape Town, Cape of Good Hope."

At the beginning of August appeared the "Pelican Island, and other Poems," a copy being immediately sent to "Mr. John Holland, with the best regards of his friend, the Author." The acknowledgment of this welcome present was accompanied by the current number of the "Literary Gazette," which contained a favourable notice of the work. As the first public expression of any critical opinion, this courteous greeting was obviously grateful to the anxious poet. The germinal idea of the "Pelican Island," and something like a key-note of the versification, may be caught from the first half-dozen lines of the poem: —

"Methought I lived through ages, and beheld
Their generations pass so swiftly by me,
That years were moments in their flight, and hours
The scenes of crowded centuries revealed;
While Time, Life, Death, the world's great actors, wrought
New and amazing changes: these I sing."

"I was a Spirit in the midst of these,
All eye, ear, thought."

Such a conception is surely highly poetical, and affords, in its treatment, unlimited scope for the development of sentiment, description, and action. It is, perhaps, in the last-named quality that the poem alone falls short of the reader's expectation; for the vicissitudes of Pelican life — beautifully as they are narrated, and instructive as they become to those who find in them

the apologue of humanity—fail to excite our sympathies like those which affect our fellow-creatures. And yet man occupies his place, and with affecting propriety, in this poetical apocalypse: —

> "Man, in the image of his Maker formed;
> Man, to the image of his tempter fallen. . .
> I saw him sunk in loathsome degradation,
> A naked, fierce, ungovernable savage,
> Companion to the brutes, himself more brutal."

The gratification which a large class of readers of taste confessedly derived from the perusal of this elegant and ingenious production, was always liable to the drawback of tolerating the tone and sentiment of evangelical religion which pervaded the whole. *Holland:* "You perceive, sir, that the writer in the 'Literary Gazette' has a qualifying and mysterious remark about the poet's peculiar views of savage life; not, assuredly, because there is any obscurity in the subject, but evidently because he did understand it." *Montgomery:* "It is the 'offence of the cross!' Any direct allusion to the state of the poor heathen — their barbarity and immorality on the one hand, or their religious experience and their hopes of salvation on the other—is generally unpalatable: I have long had to endure a good deal for my sentiments on these points as well from the open pity as the secret contempt of some of my readers." *Holland:* "But you have, on the other side, the satisfaction of knowing that many persons allow themselves to be reminded of religion by your poetry, who would hardly tolerate even *that* from any other quarter." *Montgomery:* "Yes; and some persons to whom your remark does not apply, are nevertheless, as I have said, indisposed to admit the scriptural — the actual—exhibition of our fallen humanity in

its worst phases. I had a letter the other day from my old friend Lucy Aikin, in which she speaks highly of the 'Pelican Island,' but thinks I have made my New Hollanders too vile, by attributing to particular tribes the vices of savages generally; but she is mistaken: much more is at present known about the feelings and habits of barbarous nations from the missionaries who reside among them, than could formerly be learnt from the accounts of mere voyagers and travellers, however observant and able they may have been. I am sure I would be the last man in the world to misrepresent these poor creatures: I would sooner lose a finger from my hand, than unduly blacken even the character of a cannibal: but alas! the depths of depravity into which the natives of New Holland are sunk, scarcely admit of being aggravated by description."

Viewed in the coincident foci of evangelical and moral truth,—and that is the only point at which the truth of Montgomery's poetry, and indeed his character generally, can be seen in a true light,—the concluding canto of the "Pelican Island" contains passages of power and pathos, examples of word-painting and soul-speaking, which are not surpassed by any imaginative writer in the language. If the writer of this paragraph were to confess that his judgment may have been biassed, as surely as his heart was affected, by having once heard the greater part of this canto read by a minister of the gospel in his pulpit, he might still ask upon what contemporary poem a similar experiment could be made without the risk of loss of dignity to the reader, or perception of incongruity on the part of the audience?

The portion of the poem which was perhaps most generally admired at the first, has been most frequently quoted, and, it may be added, most severely criticised,

is the elaborate description of the mode by which the coral zoophyte, one of the frailest of living creatures, raises such prodigious and enduring ramparts of hard rock in the bosom of the vast Pacific, and in other seas. In some instances the mass of coral forms a small insular peak or table-land; more commonly it exists as a border of varying width around a lake or lagoon, or engirdling a rocky island; sometimes it presents innumerable groups, as in the Maldives; or stretches out in continuous length to an almost incredible extent,—the Great Barrier Reef, near Torres Strait, being not less than twelve hundred miles long!* In describing the production and nature of coral reefs, Montgomery adopted the authority of Captain Basil Hall in his account of a voyage to the island of Loo Choo, in the Chinese Sea. The principal objection† to the poet's accuracy is, that he has represented the coral animals as carrying on their works much higher above and much deeper below the surface of the ocean, than is thought to be compatible with recently ascertained facts. It may be so; though the evidence is by no means irrefragable in that direction,—for, to say nothing of the theory which attributes all the deep coral to a sinking of the rock to which it may be attached, and admitting that most of the known coraliferous zoophytes could not exist at a greater depth than twenty or thirty fathoms,—and we do not know that the poet's meaning demands more,—we think, with Mr. Jukes, that living animals which secrete coral may occupy still deeper situations. The beauty, variety, and activity

* Surveyed by H.M.S. Fly, 1842—6. J. B. Jukes, Naturalist.

† A very elaborate Memoir on the Structure, Growth, and Habits of Coral Zoophytes, by J. D. Dana, Naturalist to the American Exploratory Expedition, was printed in Jameson's Edinburgh Philosophical Journal, 1851—2.

of such as are known, as well the more minute as the more conspicuous species, can hardly be overrated by the poet. Mr. Gilfillan has, in an article in "Tait's Magazine,"* referred to one passage in this poem in terms of such high but merited commendation, that we should feel conscious of something like injustice to the "Pelican Island" were we not to quote them here:—

"It is in the description of the sky of the South, a subject which, indeed, is itself inspiration. And yet, in that solemn sky, the great constellations, hung up in the wondering evening air, the dove, the raven, the ship of heaven 'sailing from eternity;' the wolf, 'with eyes of lightning watching the Centaur's spear;' the altar blazing, 'even at the footsteps of Jehovah's throne;' the cross, 'meek emblem of redeeming love,' which bends at midnight as when they were taking down the Saviour of the world, and which greeted the eye of Humboldt as he sailed over the still Pacific, had so hung and so burned for ages, and no poet had sung their praises. Patience, ye glorious tremblers! In a page of this 'Pelican Island,' a page bright as your own beams, and, like them, immortal, shall your splendours be yet inscribed. This passage, which floats the poem, and will long memorise Montgomery's name, is the more remarkable, as the poet never saw, but in imagination, that unspeakable southern midnight."

In the autumn of this year Montgomery visited the north of England on a Bible tour, in company with his friend Rowland Hodgson. They were at Barnard Castle on the 28th of August, and at Darlington† on

* Sept. 1846, p. 547.

† "*To Anne Backhouse, eldest Daughter of Mr. John Backhouse, Darlington.*

"May you be blessed of the Lord!
And, many a bliss possessing,

the 4th of September: they also attended a meeting at Richmond*, when the poet, in his speech, made an affecting allusion to Herbert Knowles, once a pupil in the school there, and whose well-known stanzas written in the churchyard, "Methinks it is good to be here," &c., he repeated with deep emotion. On the 10th of September they attended a meeting at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, at which were also present Dr. Steinkopff, foreign secretary of the Bible Society, and Dr. Marshman, the Baptist missionary from Serampore. Montgomery addressed the audience at considerable length, giving, as he often did, additional interest to his remarks by the charm of local allusion.

"This," said he, "is the fifteenth meeting that I have attended in this northern district,—a district which has with me a peculiar interest, as it contains so many interesting monuments and historical associations connected with the olden times. When I came to Boroughbridge, I saw those

---

Through life, in death, by deed and word,
May you be made a blessing!"

"*For Elizabeth Backhouse, her younger Sister.*

"May He who gave you to their love,
Your parents' prayers for you fulfil;
On earth below, in heaven above,
With all your heart to do his will!

"Darlington, Sept. 4. 1827. J. M."

* It was probably during this visit that he wrote the following Epitaph for Miss Mary Christian, daughter of Mr. J. C., of Gilling, near Richmond, who chose for her funeral sermon the text, Ps. xlvi. 10.: —

"'Be still, and know that I am God!'
She heard the warning, and was still:
Conducted by his staff and rod
Through death's dark vale to Zion's hill,
Fearless she walked the gloomy way
That brightens to eternal day."

famous remains, probably of Druidical idolatry, called by the people the Devil's Arrows. Why do not they still, as probably once they did, call together the people to sacrifice their children? Because we have the Bible. At the same place, and in various others that we passed, the Roman remains reminded us of the departed greatness of those once masters of the civilised world, and of their heathen gods. Why has Jupiter no longer the management of his thunder, or Mars of his weapons of war? Because we have the Bible. On our way we saw the hills topped with baronial castles, more beautiful in their ruins than in their glory, when they were dungeon-keeps for holding in vassalage the miserable serfs. Why do we delight in their ruins? Because the dreadful dominion of petty lords has passed away; and this, because we have the Bible. In the valleys we have interesting and beautiful objects of another kind,—monasteries mouldering into lonely ruins. When these were in their glory, they too often fed and pampered idle, vicious monks; but the Scriptures were not there; or if they were, they were in a dead language. The dominion of these spiritual castles has passed away, as much as the temporal castles on the hills, because the Bible is amongst us. We recollected that we were actually on the verge of the debateable land so celebrated in border history by historians and poets; scarcely a field where battles had not been fought, where the Percies and the Douglases contended for the mastery, where my countrymen and your countrymen put each other in continual fear; but now we are at peace, for we have the Bible. We are met here in a town once walled and fenced against its northern neighbours; but its walls are now thrown down, fragments only remaining to remind us of the past: here we are, persons of every sect and country, combined in friendly union to distribute that Bible which has effected these great things."

This visit to Newcastle took place when the Bible Society was passing through a crisis occasioned by the agitation of what was termed the "Apocrypha

Question;" and it was apprehended that the Rev. Andrew Thomson, the powerful Scottish opponent of the Society in this controversy, might present himself at the meeting. Unless he did so, the gentlemen having the management of the proceedings of the local auxiliary agreed with Montgomery that it would be best not to meddle with the dispute at all; but to his surprise, he found a resolution placed in his hand, which left him no alternative between formally declining to touch on the vexatious topic, or going fairly into it. He took the latter course, dealing with the arguments of the oppugners of the Society as he found them embodied in an article in a preceding number of the "Quarterly Review." * He did not, of course, attempt to deny the facts alleged, viz. the cost of working the Society; the circulation, in some cases, of Bibles containing the Apocrypha; and the defectiveness of some of the translations which had been issued: he rather defended the committee as having done, on the whole, the best they could under the circumstances: arguing that not only had the charges been grossly exaggerated in their importance, but that, assuming their amount at the enemy's estimate, the Society was still entitled to the support of the religious public. An attempt was made by a resident Presbyterian minister to make the platform the arena of a discussion on the subject; but it was not allowed, though several letters afterwards appeared in the local newspapers, and some passed between Montgomery and the individual above alluded to, on the matters in dispute.

From Newcastle the two friends proceeded to Redcar, and returned to Sheffield on the 29th of September. The controversy, after Montgomery left

* Quarterly Review, No. XXXVI. pp. 1—28.

Newcastle, was ably carried on by his friend Mr. Fenwick; at the same time the Catholic priest edified his congregation by introducing and caricaturing the remarks above quoted on the influence of the Bible. It may be added that the committee of the Bible Society adopted, and transmitted to Montgomery, a resolution expressive of "sincere gratitude for the kind and effective services" rendered to the Society in visiting several of its northern auxiliaries.

In October, John Jackson, R. A., spent a few days with a friend at Sheffield, on his way to Castle Howard. He was naturally anxious to have an interview with Montgomery, and, having enjoyed that, was equally desirous to paint his portrait. This wish having been communicated to Mr. Blackwell, he agreed with the artist for a likeness of the poet, on condition that no duplicate of the picture should be executed.* The immediate result was such a spirited and faithful delineation of the form of the head and the features of the face, that every one who saw the work even in this unfinished state was not only satisfied but pleased alike with the resemblance and the execution. Jackson took the portrait with him to London, where, by agreement, Montgomery waited upon and sat to him again; the last touches being given to the canvas on the very day when the death of Sir Thomas Lawrence left his brother academician at the head of that branch of art which they had both pursued with such distinguished success. From this portrait, Mr. Blackwell has kindly allowed the likeness which is prefixed to the present

* We regret to say that the moral part of the contract was less faithfully fulfilled than the artistic — the portrait having been surreptitiously copied under circumstances little creditable to the parties concerned.

volume to be engraved; and we believe both he and other friends of the poet will perceive that the burin has well seconded the pencil in this attempt to accomplish an object which has seldom heretofore been attended with complete success.

When the public dinner was given to Montgomery in 1825, there were two classes of persons—ladies, and several religious individuals of the other sex—who, while they could not be present on that occasion, were nevertheless anxious to pay a tribute to the virtues and talents of their honoured townsman in their own way. It was therefore proposed to raise, by subscription, a sum sufficient to buy a memento in silver plate, and also, if practicable, to found and support a Moravian mission, in the name of the poet, at the West Indian island of Tobago, where his parents had commenced a similar work about forty years previously. The project was realised this year, as will be seen by the following letters:—

Rowland Hodgson to James Montgomery.

"Highfield, Sheffield, Nov. 2. 1827.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"It is now nearly two years since your friends in this town and neighbourhood testified the respect which they entertained for you by a public dinner at which my Lord Milton presided. Your female friends, and some others, were necessarily precluded from being present on that occasion; but it was by them thought desirable that some other plan should be devised, in which all might unite in the manifestation of their sentiments. It was therefore determined to form a committee to receive any contribution that might be voluntarily made, in order to present you with a small piece of plate, and, if anything remained after this was purchased, to give the residue towards the revival of the Brethren's mission in the island of Tobago,

which was first established by your late father, and where the mortal remains of your mother were interred. It gives me great pleasure to be called upon at this time, as treasurer of the committee, to present to you an inkstand, which you will receive herewith, as an appropriate mark of the respect and value in which you are held as a Man, a Poet, and a Christian, by those amongst whom you have so long resided; and I cannot doubt but those eminent talents with which it has pleased God to endow you, will continue to be employed in promoting the particular interests of this town, and the general welfare of mankind. It gives me much pleasure to add, that *two hundred pounds* have been remitted to the Rev. C. I. La Trobe, in London, for the Tobago mission, on which island one of the Brethren is already stationed for the purpose of re-establishing the same. I trust it will please God to grant you every temporal and spiritual blessing, and that you will be permitted to see many happy returns of that day (Nov. 4.) which gave you birth. I remain, with sincere regard,

"My dear friend,

"Faithfully and affectionately yours,

"ROW. HODGSON.

"J. Montgomery, Esq."

James Montgomery to Rowland Hodgson.

"Sheffield, Nov. 9. 1827.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your letter, and its splendid accompaniments, were received on Friday last, when I was so near leaving home, for a short absence, that my answer was necessarily delayed till after my return.

"I trust, that, in my heart, when least under the influence of vanity and selfishness, I can duly estimate the high honour conferred upon me, two years ago, by many of the most respectable and distinguished of my townsmen and neighbours.

"The additional kindness of those ladies and wellwishers

who afterwards set on foot a subscription for the generous purposes particularised in your letter, claims my humblest and warmest acknowledgments. The delicacy and munificence displayed in the appropriation of the fund thus raised, by providing the elegant 'mark of respect' to myself, and consecrating the noble surplus to a service so purely Christian as that which you mention, must lay me under willing obligations to pray that 'the blessing of God, which maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow,' may ever rest upon all my benefactors.

"At another time I might have been justified in expatiating on topics so creditable to my friends and so agreeable to myself; but I have been brought so often and so much before the public, here and elsewhere, of late, that I am sure the simplest expression of my gratitude will *now* be the most becoming and acceptable. Wherefore, with my best thanks to all who have been pleased thus to honour and delight me, especially to yourself, and the gentlemen who formed the committees on both the aforementioned occasions, I am, truly,

"Your obliged and affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Rowland Hodgson, Esq."

The inkstand was an elegant specimen of Sheffield workmanship, of the estimated value of forty pounds: it bore the following inscription: — "Presented to James Montgomery, in addition to former Testimonies of Esteem for his Character, and Approbation of his Public Services, by the Inhabitants of Sheffield, and other Friends." It likewise exhibited some heraldic devices belonging to the Montgomeries; including the three *fleurs-de-lis;* a figure of Hope, with anchor in one hand, and the head of an enemy in the other; with the motto *Gardez Bien* — meaning, said Montgomery, "Have a care!" and very monitory to him of the ticklish propriety of accepting the honorary insignia

with which his kind friends had chosen to connect the compliment paid to his name. An unlucky mischance befel the plate some years afterwards: the settlement also had its vicissitudes. Erected in this and the following year, enlarged in 1839, the buildings were destroyed by a desolating hurricane in 1847, but happily soon restored* through British aid; and the mission, under the name of "*Montgomery*," continues in useful activity to this day; the congregations comprising about 1400 adults, and, including the schools, as many children. It is certainly the most appropriate memorial which could have been founded or can now be maintained in compliment to our friend; and we are sure every admirer of his genius in its highest and holiest manifestations, will concur in the sentiment recorded by himself in relation to this subject in 1840:—"With the blessing of God upon the preaching of the gospel by his servants there, may it perpetuate, to the end of time, the memory of those sainted relatives who left that name to him!"†

* The vignette on the title-page of this volume (from a sketch kindly furnished by one of the missionaries on the spot, through the authorities at home) presents a western view of the Station as restored after the hurricane of 1847; comprising the large new chapel, two dwelling-houses of the missionaries, school-houses, &c.

† Works, p. 298.

CHAP. LXIII.

1828.

LECTURES ON MODERN POETS. — PULPIT AND PLATFORM. — LETTER TO J. EVERETT. — CONVERSATION. — MONTGOMERY'S INTEREST IN POLITICAL TOPICS. — DECLINES AN INVITATION TO MEET THOMAS MOORE. — CHURCH-RATE MEETING. — CONVERSATION. — AN ADVERTISING TRICK. — THE "TOMBS OF THE FATHERS." — "CRY FROM SOUTH AFRICA." — MISSIONARY MEETING AT YORK. — DESCRIPTIVE POETRY. — CORAL FORMATIONS. — ALLUSIONS TO LOCAL OBJECTS. — YORK CASTLE. — MORAVIAN MISSIONARIES AND NEGRO SLAVERY. — "INTRODUCTORY ESSAY" TO "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."

On the evening of the 4th of January, Montgomery delivered a very pleasing Lecture, under the title of "Strictures on several Modern Poets," before the members of the Sheffield Literary and Philosophical Society. The names connected with extended remarks were those of Dermody, Bloomfield, and Kirke White. It was on this occasion he first introduced the assertion of those "general claims of poetry to pre-eminence" which he afterwards repeated with applause at the Royal Institution. Innumerable have been the attempts to define what poetry *is*, notwithstanding Johnson's celebrated dictum, in his "Life of Pope," that all such attempts "will only show the narrowness of the definer;" and perhaps Montgomery has done well to disclaim everything like a definition of "poetry in the abstract," contenting himself with using the term as signifying "*verse* in contradistinction to *prose*." Hardly less various are the opinions as to what place it should occupy as a special art, — many

authorities having wholly rejected its claim to be considered as one of the *fine arts* at all. Frederic Schlegel, who "assumes that there are only three symbolical arts for the manifestation of the beautiful," viz. music, painting, and sculpture, adds, however, that "even poetry is no fourth art alongside of the other three. It does not stand on the same line, and form, as it were, a complement of the number. It is rather the universal symbol art which comprises and combines in different mediums all those other exhibitive arts of the beautiful."* Southey, who combined in an eminent degree the practical with the speculative in this matter, denies the co-ordinate equality of music with poetry and painting in the æsthetic triad. Montgomery, differing from these authorities, assigns a very definite and pre-eminent position to "the craft of making" in the very key-note of his lecture, where the position specifically maintained is "that poetry is the eldest, the rarest, and the most excellent of the fine arts. It was the first fixed form of language, and the earliest perpetuation of thought: it existed before prose in history, before music in melody, before painting in description, and before sculpture in imagery. Anterior to the discovery of letters it was employed to communicate the lessons of wisdom, to celebrate the achievements of valour, and to promulgate the sanctions of law. Music was invented to accompany, and painting and sculpture to illustrate it."

But the claim to pre-eminence so eloquently put forth in behalf of poetry as an art, was not extended to the moral obligation of the poet to practise it, for Montgomery's engagements in the service of religion were at this time scarcely less regular, and hardly, if at all,

* "Philosophy of Life."

less important, in seeking the welfare of mankind, than those of his colleagues who were officially devoted to the ministry; for "how shall *they* preach unless they be sent?" To send forth, therefore, these evangelists to every region of the habitable globe, and to give them and their hearers the Word of God, so that every man might hear and read of the things that pertain to salvation "in his own language,"— this was the mission of him who not only laid all the fruits of his poetical genius, of his literary talents, at the foot of the Cross, but who willingly became "the servant of all" for Christ's sake. So that while he could not be said to occupy an official position in those ranks which comprise the clergy of every description, from a class which arrogates to itself true, inexpugnable, sacerdotal status, *jure divino*, to those of a far different order, who, labouring for their daily bread during six days of the week, do the "work of an evangelist" on the Sabbath, believing that, as they have the "call of God" *to* preach, and "souls for their hire" *in* preaching, they are, in the full meaning of the terms, *ministers of the Gospel*,—while to none of these did our friend belong, and although the platform, and not the pulpit was *his* preaching-stand, *there* he did preach. Nor, Catholic as he was, in the only justifiable sense of the word, did it matter to him whether the service sought from the Christian poet was to be rendered in the church or in the school-room, or—as was most frequently the case—in the chapel or the Town Hall; the end at which he aimed, the "unction" with which he spake, and the interest which he excited, were always the same. To some extent, indeed, and under certain circumstances, this desire to "do good unto all men," as well as to "think no evil of any one," gave to his conduct the appearance of indecision on important

questions; but such was not, in reality, the case, for he held his own theological opinions with a degree of firmness only exceeded by the charity which he extended to others. Hence he disliked religious controversy in all its phases, and most of all where it is so often bitter, personal, and profitless,—in the pulpit or on the platform.

James Montgomery to the Rev. James Everett.

"Sheffield, Jan. 15. 1828.

"Dear Friend,

"If I were to tell you all the reasons why I have not sooner acknowledged your various favours, in the shape of books and epistles, since we last met, I must give you the history of every hour of every day of the last six months of my life. That, however, would be such a record of misspent time as could be scarcely exceeded, except by the fatuity of misspending it, I know not how much more in making it, and tempting you to fall into the same folly of wasting what is most precious, in reading it. The worst charge which you can bring against me, on this occasion, is the usual one,—that I have procrastinated from week to week, till a pang of momentary remorse has seized and driven me to my pen, with the determination to confess my fault as the most unworthy of correspondents once more, and once more to ask forgiveness, without promising amendment in future. I know that I shall sin again and again; and the oftener you *make* me thus to offend, by laying me under similar obligations in your free and generous way, the better, for there never was a time when I more gladly ran into debt with my friends, though I never felt more reluctance to pay in kind; not because I am less sensible of kindness, or less humbly grateful for it, but, plainly, because my letter-writing age is past. If that reason will not satisfy you, I could give you another, which might satisfy you less; and another after that, with as many more as your heart

could wish, till you cried, 'Hold! enough!' But I must refer to the particulars of your several communications.

"I am glad that the 'Pelican Island' was not what you expected, because if it had been, you would have been disappointed in a way less agreeable to yourself, and less advantageous to me. If I had fallen into any train of thought which you had anticipated, neither novelty, surprise, nor peculiar interest would have been excited in your mind: you would have read the work solely as a critic; and at every step would have perceived such a difference between my matter-of-fact execution and the *beau ideal* which you had conceived of the capabilities of the subject, that had my poem been twice as good as it is, it would not have been half so good to you. One principal cause why the most successful efforts of genius are frequently decried is, that they are tried by that most inhuman *experimentum crucis*, the standard of unattainable excellence set up by the reader himself, that he may have the gratification of looking down with a degree of conscious superiority upon his masters, whose real eminence, except in imagination, he cannot approach. I disclaim any personal application of this invidious reflection upon readers (at once an author's sovereigns and his subjects) to myself or my own case. The 'Pelican Island' certainly has been a puzzle, not in its title only, which set conjecture concerning its plot at defiance, but in its development of that undiscoverable plot. Whatever be its faults or its merits, they are not of a commonplace character, for they commanded earlier and more particular notice from that fraternity of dictators, the reviewers, than any previous publication of mine had done; and they have caused more diversity of opinion also among these gentlemen, every one of whom is infallible by himself, but taken together they are quite as fallible as those who most fear them could desire. There has been so much happy contradiction among these authorities respecting the 'Pelican Island,' that it would be hard to find a sentence of censure or commendation in one of their critiques, which has not been reversed in another. Where doctors differ,

this should be so; the public will in due time settle all differences, and form a judgment as independent of them as if they had never existed. Meanwhile the author's nerves must be exercised by every species of torture or transport, which the opinions of those who have his credit at their mercy can inflict or awaken, in the presence of his contemporaries, who at such a time, in his morbid imagination, have all their eyes upon him, like those of a mob upon the victim at an execution, and all their ears open to the sarcasms and plaudits that are poured upon him. Having now nearly passed this ordeal, and been thus far pretty favourably treated, I am gradually recovering my usual tone of feeling, and resigning my poem and myself to what may await us in the ordinary course of this world's affairs. Circumstances * are daily occurring which remind me that I have every day a less stake in the interests of the present life than I had before, and that the things of eternity are becoming of more awful and imminent importance to me than they have hitherto been. I have no room, however, to moralise at present, but I can say truly that I desire to be delivered from this bondage of corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Then will the praise or condemnation of man on my vain labours to please him, and to gratify myself, as a poet, be of little influence either to depress or exalt above measure my too susceptible feelings, in whatever relates to that object of my past (perhaps my present) idolatry, the fame which I once thought the most desirable good under heaven.—I must turn to other subjects in your letter.

" My Introductory Essay to the ' Pilgrim's Progress' has been finished several weeks, and sent to press, but I cannot tell how soon or late the work itself may appear. It was promised this month; but I do not expect it before March or April, some interruptions having occurred. I could not

* One of these circumstances was the death of Mrs. Robert Montgomery, which had taken place two or three weeks before the date of this letter.

make use of Dr. Johnson's opinion in the way I expected, but I thank you for the copy of it: the late Mr. Scott, whose edition, with his Notes, Mr. Collins intends to follow, alludes to this in his Memoir of Bunyan. Bernard's 'Isle of Man' I duly received, with Lord Brooke's Poems. I had previously obtained a copy from another quarter, and already satisfied my own mind that Bunyan owed very little of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' to that work. You will see my reasons when the volume appears, and I dare say will not differ much from my conclusion. I have searched out a variety of antecedent publications to which he may have been more indebted for hints and incidents than this. Bernard's work, however, is a very ingenious one, though *that* kind of allegory is little to my taste; nothing in literature is so forced and artificial; the machinery is mere clockwork, and the personages automata. The author was, I am sure, a man of admirable mind, and fitted for much better things. Some passages in his Preface are exquisite, particularly one alluding to prisoners, and addressed to judges at the assizes. This shall be duly returned, as it came, with Lord Brooke's Poems. The latter are exceedingly elaborate productions. There is much profound and curious thought displayed in them, but very little of either fire or tenderness. They show a man of noble intellect and indefatigable study in searching for hid treasure in the least accessible depths of his own mind. It requires almost as much toil to read them as to write such poetry as passes for very pretty thinking in our more volatile age. This book came too late for the 'Christian Poet,' or I should have given more considerable extracts than the brief specimens which I had previously obtained. It will much oblige me if you would still, as you say you do, keep a look-out for old and scarce English poetry. The 'Christian Poet' sells very well, and I have several corrections and additions (of names before anonymous, principally) for a future edition.

"Accept my best thanks for Part I. of your 'History of Methodism in Manchester.' To me it will be exceedingly

interesting, on the same account as the corresponding volume referring to Sheffield * has been. It shows the images and scenes of an age gone by, yet so recent that we have the same kind of sympathy for the actors and sufferers, in comparison with those of centuries before, in distant parts of the world, as we feel towards our grandfathers and their contemporaries in comparison with the generations more remote, to which we children of yesterday can trace no kindred. So far as I have looked into it, this new history promises well.

"A note to your letter of Nov. 10th just catches my eye. I know not where to look for the manuscript of the *original* 'World before the Flood.' It is not where I expected to find it, and at present is lost. The stanzas which strayed into Mr. Pitt's green bag may be found in the 'Sheffield Register,' about the midsummer 1793, I believe.

"You mention Mr. Jackson's portrait. He left the painting unfinished, the face only being brought to the point at which he thought prudent to stop. It is now in London to have the details attached. Mr. Holland can tell you more about the likeness than I can.

"I see you are going to Ireland this month, to Shetland next spring, and to Switzerland when you can. I must only accompany you in spirit, and with my prayers, for your preservation, and the blessing of God with you wherever his providence may lead you. I cannot look forward so far as to say, that I have either plan or desire respecting any journeys in the current year, even if life be spared; several, however, have been proposed and pressed upon me, and I must hold myself disengaged at least in regard to two, both of course within the precincts of Old England. My kindest regards to Mrs. E.

"Your sincere friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P.S. I am sorry to say, that your lion, who stands in the Museum, is so much out of repair, that I believe we

* History of Methodism in Sheffield.

must strip off his skin.* I hope we shall not find an ass under it, and I am afraid we shall not be able to restore him to himself again, that is, make a lion of him again."

Jan. 24. Mr. Holland called upon Montgomery and found him busy writing, "weighed down," he said, "beneath an accumulation of straws and feathers. I have hardly," he added, "been a moment free from engagements since I left the Pelican Island; and I believe I shall have to embark on another voyage thither to get quit of these pestering demands upon my time, spirits, and temper." He was at the moment busied in the preparation of a memorial to be laid before a public meeting of the inhabitants of Sheffield, on the still exciting question of Church Rates, and in relation to which he knew he should occupy an unfavourable position. On the following day Mr. Holland took tea in the Hartshead with Montgomery; his nephew, John James, from Fulneck, Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell, and the Misses Gales, being also present. The bard appeared in good health and spirits; but his feelings were accidentally excited by a little circumstance which, to a man of the temperament of ordinary mortals, would either have produced no emotion at all, or, at the most, have been regarded only as a matter of course. During tea Mr. Blackwell and he kept up a brisk conversation about the changes of government which were just then taking place in consequence of the resignation of Lord Goderich, Mr. Canning's successor in the premiership, and the introduction of the Duke of Wellington to office. It was on occasions like this that the political fervour and vivacity of the worthy ex-editor would

* A cranium only was found under it, and this, as already mentioned, is at present in the Museum of the Literary and Philosophical Society — *ex ungue leonem.*

sometimes become more vivid by collision, and he appeared reanimated for a moment with the old spirit, —

> "As the worn war-horse, at the trumpet's sound,
> Erects his mane, and neighs, and paws the ground—
> Disdains the curb his generous lord assigns,
> And longs to rush on the embattled lines,
> So he——"

So he would *talk*, when in private, with intimate friends; but even for them he would not *write* on political topics; and never, however apparently inviting the occasion or favourable the opportunity, could he be persuaded to produce a "leader" for the "Iris" after he had done with it, though he frequently enough volunteered paragraphs in advocacy of local benevolent institutions.

As Mrs. Blackwell had not seen the poet's silver inkstand, it was placed on the table. Mr. Blackwell remarked that it did not appear to have been much used. Montgomery replied that it was only fit to be used on great occasions. *Holland:* "Such as the introduction of the Poet Laureate, who I should like to see in this room." *Montgomery:* "It is my own fault, or I should have been sitting in a far more splendid room, and with a poet more popular than Southey himself." And now came our knowledge of the cause of his evidently ruffled feelings: with some reluctance, he explained that Thomas Moore was then on a visit at Stoke Hall, in Derbyshire, the pleasant residence of Robert Arkwright, Esq., whose wife was a Kemble; from this lady* the Sheffield poet had just received a note in-

* Mrs. Arkwright was herself a composer of beautiful songs, which, according to the testimony of Moore, she sung with exquisite taste and effect.

viting him to spend a few days with the author of "Lalla Rookh" on the banks of the Derwent. To this proposal, otherwise so gratifying, there was one insuperable obstacle in the mind of Montgomery,—he had written the review of Moore's "Odes and Epistles" in the "Eclectic;" that article had even been republished with the author's name, and without his authority certainly, but with the best intention it might be. Under these circumstances, and as he could not be quite sure that Moore had ever read, or that he knew him to have been the writer of the strictures in question, he could not consent to meet him by appointment as if nothing of the sort had happened. As a reviewer, Montgomery added, he had done his duty, not only without anything like personal ill-will, but most conscientiously, with regard to the work in question; and that whatever might be the feelings of Moore himself in reference to the article in question, if he knew he had read it as his, he should be glad to meet him. But, as the matter stood, he could not join the poet at Stoke Hall, enjoy with him the hospitalities of the Arkwrights, and indulge in that generous interchange of courtesies for which both parties were otherwise prepared, when, perhaps immediately after the interview, or certainly soon after his own death, he might be described as the man who could, at one time, write with such severity against the immoral doctrines of the Anacreontic poet, and afterwards meet him at the social board of a common friend as if nothing of the sort had happened; under other circumstances, he should have liked well enough to have been introduced to Moore. His first thought on receiving Mrs. Arkwright's invitation was to hint to her, in a letter of apology, that there was a difficulty in the way which he could not explain; "but," said he, turning to Miss Gales, "you know

when a lady and a poet get together, they are sure to get over every difficulty in the way of such a conclusion as that at which they are anxious to arrive: so it would have been in this case." His next intention was to write a note to Moore himself, avowing the authorship of the strictures on the "Odes and Epistles." The novelty of this resolution led him through a page and a half of letter-paper, when he changed his mind, and finally adopted the wiser course of making an apology to the lady in general terms, and confiding the specific matter of his anxiety to his friend Dr. Knight, whom he should have accompanied to Stoke, and who might mention it or not, at his discretion. The subject *was* mentioned; and Moore said he thought better, and not worse, of Montgomery for the delicacy of feeling which had influenced him on this occasion, much as he regretted having in consequence missed the anticipated pleasure of his company.* This was the testimony of the Rev. Francis Hodgson, of Bakewell, who shared in the regret of his friend.

Jan. 31. We have briefly adverted, under 1826, to

* Moore thus alludes to the subject in his Diary:—"Jan. 26. 1828. Forgot to mention that Montgomery the poet was asked to come (from Sheffield) yesterday to dinner with a Dr. —— who dined here, but refused, from rather an over-delicate scruple with respect to me. It appears he once wrote a very violent attack either on myself or my poetry, which, though he is not quite sure I knew anything about it (as is really the case), makes him feel not altogether justified in meeting me till I am apprised of the circumstance. Anxious as I had been before to make his acquaintance, this, of course, increased my desire; and we were in great hopes, from the messages sent, that he would have come to-day; but he did not. It seems he writes all those imaginative (and some of them beautiful) things of his in one of the closest and dirtiest alleys in all dirty Sheffield." Then follows the entry relative to Montgomery's speech in 1823, already referred to.

the important part which, in the beginning of that year, Montgomery took in the dispute about church-rates in Sheffield. From that period to the present, chiefly in consequence of the distress of the working population of the town arising out of the want of trade, the question of a rate had been in abeyance. On the 31st of January, this year, a vestry-meeting — and, as it turned out, a "monster meeting"—was called, and assembled in the chancel of the parish church, for the purpose of taking into consideration the propriety of levying a rate upon the whole parish of Sheffield to repair the fences of the old churchyard, to fence the three new churches, to provide a bell for each, as also books, sacramental utensils, ornaments, &c. for two of them." The vicar presided, and having opened the business of the day in general terms, he called upon Mr. Montgomery to lay before the meeting a statement of the case at issue. As factious opposition was never a feature in the poet's character, and as in this instance he certainly regarded a rate as at once legal, reasonable, and necessary, he endeavoured to show why it ought to be granted. Nothing, however, could be further from the mind of the bulk of the meeting, consisting, as it did, almost entirely of recusant ratepayers, than any disposition to deal with the question on its merits: and accordingly, no sooner was the drift of the speaker clearly perceived, than an uproar, such as can but rarely, if ever, have been heard before within the walls of a church, arose from the densely-packed and clamorous crowd. With astonishing courage and perseverance Montgomery stood his ground, confronted the hubbub, and continued his statement, not, indeed, until he had delivered all he meant to say, but until he sunk with excitement and exhaustion.* This extraordinary

* The speech was a most admirable specimen of forensic argu-

meeting, although a failure with respect to the main object of its promoters, had a threefold issue: 1st. it was the last time such an unseemly exhibition was permitted to disgrace that consecrated enclosure; 2nd. it satisfied all parties that thenceforward a church-rate would never be either voted or collected in Sheffield; and 3rd. it levied on Montgomery's popular reputation, as the advocate of liberal opinions, the highest penalty he could pay—the double reproach of being a friend of the clergy, and an advocate for the support of the Established Church.

When Mr. Holland afterwards asked Montgomery whether he did not feel somewhat alarmed at the threatening aspect of the unruly multitude before whom he stood in the ancient chancel, he replied that he did not*;

ment and eloquence. It was published in the "Sheffield Iris" of Feb. 5. 1828. from a MS. supplied by the speaker himself, and fills five closely-printed columns.

* He was, however, somewhat surprised and annoyed to learn that it was intended to deny him a hearing on the alleged ground that he was not a *ratepayer:* the fact being, that having succeeded to the premises occupied by Mr. Gales, he had, for more than thirty years, paid all sort of rates, on demand, without ever asking a question; and it turned out that the name of his predecessor had remained unaltered in the parish books for more than forty years! During this period the overseers themselves, whenever they thought Montgomery could render any public service, had always called upon him as a ratepayer, and had repeatedly appointed him on committees of such persons only. In one instance he had been summoned before the magistrate and paid a penalty as a ratepayer. The scene was an amusing one:—a heavy fall of snow had suddenly occurred, and about fifty inhabitants, including the poet, were brought before the Bench on the charge of neglecting to have the snow swept from the footpath in front of their premises respectively. "What shall I do with you?" said the magistrate. "You can do nothing but fine us," said Montgomery, as spokesman. And, accordingly, they all paid a nominal penalty, and costs.

for however some persons might naturally enough have felt terrified in such a position at such a crisis, he knew the character of Sheffield mobs better than most people; and on this occasion, though there was more than enough of turbulence, there was nothing of the fierceness which he had sometimes witnessed under other circumstances of popular excitement. Besides, he added, "that while no man in his right mind would offer himself a volunteer in such a conflict between the supporters and the opponents of a church-rate, yet no man, who deserved the name, ought to shrink from the conscientious discharge of a public duty, however painful to his feelings or perilous to his popularity."

Feb. 6. Montgomery called at the "Iris" office: the morning was exceedingly mild and beautiful; exactly such weather as the poet most enjoyed. *Montgomery:* "I suppose *you* will have heard the wood-lark singing, on your way through the fields? I have heard the red-breast, who seems already to have changed his autumnal for his spring note." *Holland:* "I have heard neither lark nor robin to day; but it does so happen that I have just been reading your apostrophe to the latter bird in 'Prose by a Poet;' and as one naturally speculates with zest on a forbidden topic, I have been trying to make out what 'happened' to give rise to the mysterious record on the same page.* My notion is, that the writer fell asleep over his

* "Well, it *has* happened. Something truly worthy of being remembered no more for ever occurred in this room just after I had concluded the foregoing sentence. It lasted half an hour; and though the circumstance especially to be forgotten occupied less than two minutes of that time, the whole transaction must be buried here, with no other epitaph than this note of interrogation (?), which shall never be answered till the world's end."—*Prose by a Poet*, vol. ii. p. 47, "My Journal at Scarborough."

journal!" *Montgomery:* "As I have said, the secret shall never be divulged: I may, however, say your guess is wide of the mark; but, curiously enough, it so happens, that only this very morning I had nearly let the subject slip, and only caught it just before it passed over my tongue."

About this time appeared a widely circulated notice of the publication of "Montgomery's New Poem, The Omnipresence of the Deity;" a style of advertisement well calculated — whatever was intended — to lead to the supposition that the only poet of that name then popularly known, and around whose name a halo of piety and genius had long been gathering, was the author of the work thus announced.* To admit that Montgomery was capable of feeling the slightest degree of anything like envy at the success of a poetical contemporary, would be an injustice to his memory, as it would have been an insult to his understanding: while to deny that he felt annoyed by what could not but be regarded as at best an act of singular disingenuousness on the part of those interested in the success of the advertisement in question, would be to compliment his good nature at the expense of his good sense. It was a poor subterfuge to say that the title-page of the book itself did not favour delusion as to its authorship, when, in fact, purchasers had been first misled by the advertisement. Indeed, so influential was the prestige of a name familiar to literature, and so little was a trick suspected even in official quarters, that, to say nothing of egregious compliments paid to the Sheffield poet, both orally and by letters, he received a London

* This unworthy trick was repeated in an advertisement which, for the moment, deceived many persons, immediately after the poet's death. Vide "Athenæum," June 17. 1854.

evening paper in which the "New Poem" was formally reviewed as *his*, in spite of the evidence of the title-page, as well as every other page of the book. "Such criticism," said our friend, "is enough to humble the proudest poet, when he finds himself puffed in a quarter where not only his style is unrecognised, but his very identity mistaken!"

At this time he happened to read, and was much struck with, a paragraph in a newspaper, to the effect that "the Jews occasionally held a 'solemn assembly' in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, the ancient burial place of Jerusalem. They are obliged to pay a heavy tax for the privilege of thus mourning, in stillness, at the sepulchres of their ancestors." On this hint he composed the touching stanzas, entitled the "Tombs of the Fathers,"* which first appeared in a volume of poetical contributions by various hands, published by the Rev. Francis Hodgson for the benefit of a brother clergyman. It was probably the perusal of these lines which led the Rev. Dr. Croly to send a copy of his romance of "Salathiel, the Wandering Jew," to Montgomery, with an assurance that he was "among the admirers of his zeal, his feelings, and his poetry." Of the same date is the "Cry from South Africa,"† in advocacy of the erection of a chapel at Cape Town for the negro slaves of the colony.

April 21. Montgomery went to York to preside at a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting: he was the guest of the Rev. Robert Wood, at whose house Mr. Everett met him. He appeared very unwell, having left Sheffield at five o'clock in the morning: "I courted sleep," said he, "but it would not come." *Everett:* "You were less successful than John Bunyan with his verse, who,

* Works, p. 339. † Ibid. p. 341.

when he 'pulled, it came.'" *Montgomery:* "Aye; but he first got his 'subject by the end'— which I could not. People seem to have dealt in that way with me; for I have lately been drawn out like wire!"* In talking about the part he would have to sustain in the evening, he said, "I hope Mr. Wood has not done at York, as Mr. Marsden did at Shrewsbury last year:—on entering the city, I saw, on a large placard announcing the meeting, that 'James Montgomery, Esq., the celebrated poet, would be present!' Much as I was grieved at this, the matter was rendered worse, as it happened, by the fact that, in the evening, although I had nearly lost my voice, I was made to deliver five or six speeches. And to crown the whole, when we went to a friend's house after the meeting, good Mr. Marsden, like a poet as he is†, put a hundred interrogatories to me across the room, which, voice or no voice, I had to answer aloud, till I fairly broke down." Descriptive poetry was mentioned. *Montgomery:* "In reading descriptive poetry, we often form images in the mind that differ widely from the reality, in connection with places we have not

* He had only a few days previously declined a pressing invitation to take part in a similar meeting at Hull, alleging his numerous engagements as an obstacle. "Indeed," he added, "the very thoughts of them make my heart fail; and I am ready at times to lay down this cross altogether, from personal infirmities to which the labour of action is nothing, or rather is relief when I am actually engaged in it and there is no retreat. I must therefore rely on your generous forbearance and forgiveness if I say, 'I pray you have me excused:' and may the blessing of God a thousand-fold compensate in some other way for any deficiency in my services at your festival!" — *Letter to Rev. D. Isaac, April 9th.*

† The Rev. Joshua Marsden, a missionary in North America and Bermuda. After his return to England, in 1814, he published "Amusements of a Mission," "Forest Musings," &c.

seen. I had not read the poem of 'Rokeby' when I first visited the place; but, having spent a day or two there two years ago, I was much struck with the general agreement between the scenery and my recollection of Scott's descriptions.* In the same way, I once read Bloomfield's 'Banks of the Wye,' and found, when I afterwards visited Tintern Abbey and the adjacent scenes, that I had derived a very accurate idea of them from the language of the poet: indeed, we must generally see the locality of such a poem before we can fully enter into the author's mind and feelings." *Wood:* "What then becomes of the Pelican Island, which we never can see?" *Montgomery:* "You may see as much of it as I ever saw: and so far as the language is exactly according to truth and nature, and your perspicacity of these exact also, there will be an agreement between the ideas embodied by the author, and the impressions made on the mind of the reader; and that is all that can be claimed for imaginary scenes. But do not mistake me: I by no means intend to say that it is *necessary* to the enjoyment of descriptive poetry, even in a high degree, to be familiar with the real scene; I only contend that in many cases the accuracy and beauty of poetical description can only be *fully* appreciated by actual comparison with the objects described." He then mentioned the origin of the "Pelican Island," and the missionary speech of similar import, which we have already described, recalling Mr. Everett's attention to an incident connected with the latter:—"When I was speaking, I adverted to the narrative of Captain Flinders; but, in my ardour, I was utterly unable at the moment to recollect the name of a bird with whose history I was so familiar, and was

* Rokeby, canto ii. and notes.

actually compelled to ask, 'What is the name of that large white bird, with a pouch under its bill, and that pierces its breast to feed its young?' '*A pelican!*' shouted Captain Hawtrey. 'Yes, that's the bird,' said I: so you see the first time I visited the Pelican Island I found the bird flown; and I never ventured upon the experiment again in a speech. My next glimpse of the subject was at Ockbrook, where I wrote a stanza or two—but again, the bird was flown! Still the subject never ceased to haunt my imagination until the moment of the sudden and complete development of the plan of my poem on my way home from Harrogate in the autumn of 1826." *Wood:* "I recollect, on a missionary occasion, hearing you make an allusion to the coral islands in the South Seas." *Montgomery:* "Yes; and I surprised and delighted the president of your Conference (the Rev. John Stephens) with the conceit that, judging from the size of existing reefs, and seeing that coral islands are still constantly in progress of formation and enlargement, a time might arrive when these would coalesce, and a new continent appear where now only spreads a vast expanse of ocean with its insular spots—a continent peopled with human beings blessed with the light of the gospel, basking beneath the meridian blaze of a sun more glorious than ours, and reflecting back to the moon, looking down in loveliness on the scene, a light thirteen degrees broader and brighter than that which the earth at present imparts. 'Thus,' I added, after-generations may witness nature and grace, heaven and earth, reciprocally increasing and diffusing their light respectively.' But this rhapsody had no connection with the original conception of the 'Pelican Island.'"

The Wesleyan chapel, in which the meetings were held, was crowded to excess both in the morning and in the evening—Quakers, Calvinists, and church-goers

contributing to swell an audience which the reputation of the poet had done much towards bringing together. In his introductory address he dwelt at some length and with great animation on the history, antiquities, and importance of the city of York; turning from the past to the present, — from the legions of Constantine, and the conflicts between the houses of York and Lancaster, to the establishments for the celebration of religion and the administration of justice — to the venerable cathedral and the frowning castle. He adverted frankly to his own repeated imprisonment there: adding, that whatever might be the justice or injustice of his sentence, he had learnt within yonder walls, if not the lessons of humility, which he might have done, at least to mistrust the efficacy of punishment merely as an instrument of moral reformation: it might *restrain*, but it could not *correct* vice. He then proceeded to contrast the influence of the gospel as a corrective of wickedness, with different non-religious schemes for regenerating humanity at home, and with the various systems of heathenism abroad. In the evening he dwelt largely on the duty and importance of *prayer* in connection with missionary operations; and he did this with a fervid eloquence that seemed the more affecting and conclusive as coming from a layman — and a poet. One of his observations was very striking: "Prayer," said he, "is not only the sublimest expression of the Church on earth, but there seems to be something very like prayer among the souls of the martyrs in heaven itself, — 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?'* And even in hell there was prayer, but it was uttered with a tongue of fire, and without the hope of personal advantage."†

* Rev. vi. 10. † Luke xvi. 24 — 31.

April 23rd. Montgomery accompanied Mr. Everett to the castle, the latter being anxious to ascertain which were the rooms occupied by the poet during his imprisonment.* On approaching the massive entrance he quoted the well-known line of Dante, —

"Lasciate ogni speranza, voi che 'ntrate."

"All Hope abandon, ye who enter here!"

"NEW BUILDINGS," YORK CASTLE

* That portion of the castle which comprised Montgomery's rooms was in his time termed the "New Buildings," exactly opposite to, and architecturally the counterpart of, the edifice in which the Assize Courts are at present held, as will be seen from the vignette in the title-page of this volume. The poet's apartment

And to how many who enter this stronghold is the admonition literally applicable! Whatever might be the feelings with which Montgomery revisited a scene where he once suffered so much, his companion felt a deep interest in the consciousness that the man who had been twice sentenced to incarceration within those walls, was not only at that moment repacing the green-sward in freedom and in joy, but was honoured and beloved by every one who knew him.* These emotions were, of course, heightened on entering the apartments which had been occupied by the poet, altered as some of them had been. Montgomery, who had no taste for *horrors* of any description, turned with repugnance from a collection of instruments of murder, and of legal torture, which have very properly ceased to be exhibited: the latter especially, he remarked, ought to be burnt with the laws that authorise their use, or buried a thousand miles deep in the earth! The gallows, and its melancholy use being mentioned, Montgomery said, the "new drop," was one of the themes of conversation and admiration among the inmates of the prison when he was there,— the chaplain himself having remarked that "six might *hang very comfortably* at once, but seven were too many!"

is indicated by the upper window between the pilasters, at the right-hand extremity of the prison. The other window (from which he used to watch the motion of the windmill in the direction of Bishopthorpe, Vol. I. p. 221.), is in the end of the building, and overlooks the Foss-mill bridge, from which it is distinctly seen.

* This remark can hardly be extended to the barber into whose shop he went to be shaved after one of the meetings, and who, having first entertained a customer on whom he was operating with an account of the Sheffield poet and his visit to York, edified the latter in his turn with some not very uncomplimentary opinions on Methodism; the whole being listened to with a becoming gravity!

The poet and his friend afterwards visited the cathedral, and the site of St. Mary's Abbey; the interest of the former place not having at that time been *lessened* by successive fires, nor that of the latter *increased* by the erection of the hall of the Philosophical Society.

He found at Mr. Wood's not fewer than eight or ten albums, accompanied by petitions from the owners soliciting inscriptions, with which, as usual, he good-naturedly complied. On his way to take the coach for Sheffield, he encountered a more formidable autograph collector in the person of Dr. Raffles, who pressed him for the MS. of the "Pelican Island." Montgomery replied, that he did not know what to do in the case; there were so many claimants, he thought he had better throw the book into Chancery!

On the 30th of April a large public meeting was held in Sheffield, to consider the propriety of petitioning Parliament for the repeal of the Act, passed in 1826, prohibiting country bankers from issuing their local notes, under 5*l.*, after the expiration of three years from that time. Montgomery took an active part in the proceedings, speaking at great length in favour of repealing the Act, on the ground that a continuance of the use of small notes in Sheffield was "of essential importance to the convenience, the comfort, and the morals of the working classes;" and, viewed from the speaker's position at the time, such appeared to be the fact. The prayer of the petitioners, however, echoed as it was by the country generally, was not listened to — happily for the town, in which, had it been otherwise, the crash of one of the old local banks, which occurred a few years afterwards, and produced so much suffering and loss to individuals, would probably have been still more disastrous.

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Sheffield, May 3. 1828.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I have an opportunity of returning Lord Brooke's Poems by Mr. Blackwell, and gladly avail myself of it to say that I hope you arrived safely at home from York last week, and that you are fully recovered from the attack of indisposition, which alarmed me more, perhaps, than it alarmed yourself, when I found you writhing under so much bodily pain in a mortal quarter. May the Lord preserve you long, and enable you to serve Him and his cause, in the manner which He, not you, shall choose!—and yet you will choose that and that only, I think,—desiring to have no will but his. I shall keep Bernard's 'Isle of Man' a little longer, as I may have occasion for it when I come to Bunyan's 'Holy War.'

"I am, your obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Jas. Everett, Manchester."

May 9. Montgomery called at the 'Iris' office, and, asking for a private interview with Mr. Holland, said he wished him to read the correspondence which had taken place between himself and the Moravian missionaries at Antigua, relative to some imputations on their conduct, contained in a private letter addressed by one of the Wesleyan missionaries to his friends in Sheffield, on the vexed question of negro slavery. The poet was not only a good deal perplexed, but, as he confessed, deeply grieved by this inconsiderate act of an individual who did not intend the mischief that followed. "I was peculiarly wounded," said Montgomery in a letter to a friend, "because the complaint came from my *friends*, the Methodists; for friends from my heart I call them, and love them as such (and they

know it), so far as they are servants of the Lord Jesus. 'Had an enemy done this,' I might have borne it better." He intimated his intention of alluding to the subject at the Wesleyan Missionary Meeting, where he had to preside in a few days. Mr. Holland, however, dissuaded him from such a course; and he acted upon the advice, and said nothing. But the matter did not drop here; and, among others, his esteemed Quaker correspondent, Miss Rowntree, one of the most zealous contributors to the Moravian Mission fund, took him warmly to task when they met; while he, with no less fervour of expression, endeavoured not to deny the ground, but to palliate the force, of the imputation.

"I am grieved," he afterwards says to her in a letter, "to find that I have unintentionally and unconsciously hurt your feelings by my silence, and I fear wounded them by the warmth with which I vindicated my Moravian brethren in their policy with regard to slavery in the West Indies. I think I can say, with warrantable confidence, that however defective their views, or rather the views of individuals among them may be, with regard to the condition of slavery, no equal number of human beings have done anything near so much to mitigate its evils and assuage its miseries, as they have been doing for *ninety-six years past.* But that is not the point at which I aim; my jealousy for the true honour of my brethren having run away with my pen to record one testimony more in their favour against the many things that may be said against them by those who know them not, or who know not how to appreciate their faithful labours. To return: I am quite sure that nothing which you said excited the smallest resentment in my bosom against yourself, though I daresay I was angry enough at the circumstance which occasioned the inquiry on your part respecting the Brethren's ideas and practices in reference to slavery and slave-holding."

Montgomery was present, as usual, at the annual

meeting of the "Aged Female Society," and took a principal part in the proceedings. After explaining and enforcing the merits of this institution in relation to the class of poor old women, who were the objects of its regard, he said he wished to submit to the ladies present the question, Whether it were not practicable to do something towards the improvement of a class of *young women* with which every person who heard him was familiar, and upon whom they were all more or less dependent for domestic comfort at least,—he meant female servants? The hint was not lost upon those to whom it was given. A preliminary meeting of ladies was held on the 20th of May, at which Montgomery was present, and submitted a plan, and read a series of rules for "A Society for the Improvement and Encouragement of Female Servants." His friend, Edward Smith, the Quaker, co-operated in this laudable effort to do good in a difficult direction; and a society was formed: but "president and secretary" both laboured in vain. This may, perhaps, be said to have been the only branch of local philanthropy which bore little or no fruit.

In the month of May appeared Collins's edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress," with an "Introductory Essay by James Montgomery." A single passage exhibits, in so clear and comprehensive a manner, the general character and admitted estimate of this extraordinary book, that we cannot forbear to transcribe it:—

"It has been the lot of John Bunyan, an unlettered artisan, to do more than one in a hundred millions of human beings, even in civilised society, is usually able to do. He has produced a work of imagination of such decided originality, as not only to have commanded public admiration on its first appearance, but, amidst all changes of time, and

style, and modes of thinking, to have maintained its place in the popular literature of every succeeding age; with the probability that, so long as the language in which it is written endures, it will not cease to be read by a great number of the youth of all future generations, at that period of life when their minds, their imaginations, and their hearts are most impressible with moral excellence, splendid picture, and religious sentiment. No disparagement which the learned, the gay, or the profane can cast upon its humble pages, its homely diction, or its pious discourses, can ever sink the 'Pilgrim's Progress' into contempt, or diminish its author's imperishable glory. When all has been said against it that wit can devise, or malignity utter, it will still remain a monument of the felicitous application of a singular talent to a subject for ever equally interesting on one main point, at least—the soul's salvation; while to those who are led to peruse it, of whatever degree of intelligence or cultivation they may be, it will continue to be a book exercising more influence over minds of every class than the most refined and sublime genius, with all the advantages of education and good fortune, has been able to rival, in this respect, since its publication. Indeed, it would be difficult to name another work of any kind, in our native tongue, of which so many editions have been printed—of which so many readers have lived and died; the character of whose lives and deaths must have been, more or less, affected by its lessons and examples, its fictions and realities. This fact alone proves that, though there may be many books superior to it in learning, taste, and ability,—and we readily admit that there *are*,—the 'Pilgrim's Progress' is no ordinary offspring of no ordinary mind. It is impossible that a production of fancy, without some extraordinary merit of its own, standing perfectly apart from everything else of the sort, could have remained so long and triumphantly popular."

The foregoing sentiments, as indisputably true as they are happily expressed, have been indorsed by all subsequent writers on the subject, including Robert Southey,

Mr. Macaulay, Dr. Philip, George Offer, in this country, and Dr. Cheever in America. Although this is not the place to review the opinions which have been put forth concerning Bunyan generally, either as a man or an author, we may be permitted very briefly to touch upon one point as affecting him in the latter character. We allude to the question which, raised in his own lifetime, has been reiterated to the present hour,—Was he indebted to *any*, and if so to *what*, preceding publication, for the idea, not to say the plan, of his immortal work? Montgomery first, in the "Christian Poet," threw out the hint, which he repeats in this essay, that "*the Pilgrim*, in 'Whitney's Emblems,' might perhaps have inspired the first idea of this extraordinary work now under consideration;" an opinion which Southey quotes without any disparagement of its probability. Mr. Offer, who has gone much farther into this inquiry, having examined all the known allegories of antecedent date which could be imagined to bear any resemblance to the "Pilgrim's Progress," comes to the conclusion that Bunyan spoke what was literally true when he declared that he was not in any way indebted to any one for his story: such is certainly our conviction. Mr. Offer says that, "had it been discovered that some hints might have been given by previous writers, it would not have been any serious reflection upon the originality of a work which has no prototype. This idea," he adds, "is well expressed by Mr. Montgomery:—'If the Nile could be traced to a thousand springs, it would still be the Nile; and so far undishonoured by its obligations, that it would repay them a thousandfold by reflecting upon the nameless streams the glory of being allied to the most renowned of rivers.'" * It

* Mr. Offer's very curious Essay is prefixed to an exact reprint

was at one time intended by Collins that the "Pilgrim's Progress" should be followed by a similar edition of Bunyan's "Holy War," with an Introductory Essay by Montgomery, in which he intended to make particular inquiry into the "analogies or parallelisms" alleged to exist between certain portions of that work and Bernard's "Isle of Man; or the Proceedings in Manshire against Sin:" but the design dropped.

of the *first edition* of the "Pilgrim's Progress," 1678, issued by the Hanserd Knollys Society in 1847. Southey's "Life of Bunyan" was written for "the most beautiful edition that has ever appeared of this famous work,"—that printed by Major in 1830.

CHAP. LXIV.

1828.

ANTI-SLAVERY MEETING. — MEMOIRS OF MRS. HUNTINGTON. — THE POET IN HIS GARDEN. — LETTERS ABOUT THE "WHISPERER." — THE "MONTGOMERY GALLERY." — LETTER TO SARAH GALES. — WELSH MOUNTAINS AND PEOPLE. — LADY LYTTELTON. — LETTER TO MISS GALES. — CONWAY CASTLE. — SCENERY OF GRAY'S "BARD." — ASCENT OF SNOWDON. — INTERVIEW WITH MRS. HEMANS. — LETTER FROM SIR ALEXANDER JOHNSTONE. — SIR RICHARD PHILLIPS AT SHEFFIELD. — STOPPING RURAL FOOTPATHS. — LETTER FROM MR. HOLLAND.

JUNE 9. At the beginning of summer Montgomery was again deeply engaged with the question of negro slavery. Meetings had been held in other towns to further the entire abolition of that abominable system; and it was now the turn of the abolitionists in Sheffield to come forward as became them in this mighty movement. Upon the poet devolved the duty of calling his townspeople together, drawing up resolutions to lay before them, and preparing a petition to Parliament. This was an affair of considerable delicacy; for while most of the inhabitants, who thought on the subject at all, were agreed as to the desirableness, as well as the practicability of putting an end to slavery in the British dominions, they differed materially about the time and the manner of doing it. Montgomery, whose prudence happily was commensurate with his enthusiasm, so managed the matter, that all parties, even the most scrupulous, could concur at least in the prayer of the petition; while others, who overlooked all conflicting

considerations in the admitted fact that here was a monster evil which ought to be remedied, were pleased with the placard calling the meeting, in which Montgomery had instructed the printer to use the largest type he had in the first of the two words of the headline — "No Slavery!" The meeting was held on the 9th of June, when Montgomery spoke at great length, and with equal propriety and effect.* An outline of his address lies before us, in his own handwriting; but as the arguments have lost most of their interest in their success, we shall only transcribe a single passage, which seems too remarkable for its force and beauty to justify us in consigning it to oblivion.

"What," demanded the speaker, "has been the condition of every negro mother during the last eight-and-twenty years in her hour of sorrow and peril? Her condition has been that of the woman in the Apocalypse, who cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered; while a

---

* This and similar meetings in different parts of the country were auxiliary to one which was held in Exeter Hall in the month of March, and at which Lord Brougham presided. Although not personally present at this great metropolitan gathering of anti-slavery delegates, Montgomery's words were heard, and his spirit felt, even on that occasion, in a way which will not soon be forgotten by those individuals who listened to the animating speech of the Rev. J. Carlisle, of Belfast, and joined in the applause which followed its concluding sentiment, —

"Where a tyrant never trod,
Where a slave was never known,
But where Nature worships God,
In the wilderness alone, —
Thither, thither would I roam;
There my children may be free;
I for them will find a home,
They shall find a grave for me."

Wanderer of Switzerland, Part vi. 5, 6.

great red dragon stood before her, ready to devour her offspring as soon as it should be born! The dragon of slavery has thus swallowed the negro woman's progeny, during a whole generation, the moment they saw the light of this world: happy, thrice happy, indeed have been they (and their number, too, must have been great) who, like the child of that woman, were caught up from his rage unto God and to his throne. But miserable have been the survivors; hundreds of thousands of children have thus been born; they have not indeed been murdered; but of every one of them it may be said, without a quibble, that *its life has been taken from it* and given to another, who had already many more lives than his own at his disposal,—given to a master, for whom it was doomed to live, and labour, and suffer, and spend its strength! Ought these things to be so? They ought not."

There was a good deal of spirited discussion at the meeting; and between the real, but cautious opponents of slavery, who were almost afraid to move lest they should do more harm than good, and the reckless haters of the system and its supporters, who neither saw nor feared danger, Montgomery had enough to do to mediate for the general co-operation: he was, however, successful, though his spirits were for the moment a good deal ruffled by this "fine brush," as he called the altercation. He had hardly reached home, when a letter was placed in his hand, bearing the address, "J. Montgomery, Esq., forwarded by Mr. Montgomery," with an intimation that a gentleman was waiting. Who could this be? Was it Robert Montgomery, whose portrait and memoir* were lying on the table? Whoever it was, he would gladly have been spared the ceremony of an introduction to any stranger, in the present excited and outworn state of his feelings. It

* In the "Imperial Magazine" for June, 1828.

turned out that the letter was from Collins of Glasgow, and the gentleman who presented it a respectable inhabitant of Irvine in Ayrshire, the birthplace of our bard; and who, besides these credentials, was recommended by the coincidence that both his father and his mother were *Montgomeries.*

The letter of Collins referred to his reprint of an American book, "Memoirs of the late Mrs. Susan Huntington, of Boston, Mass.," for which Montgomery had just written an "Introductory Essay," the object of which is to demonstrate the influence and value of those unambitious memorials of piety which record the actual, and it may be deep and varied, religious experience of men and women not otherwise remarkable in the estimation of their fellow creatures.

"In Mrs. Huntington," says the essayist, "we have an exemplification of Christian character in the female sex, rising into grace, expanding into beauty, and flourishing in usefulness, from infancy to youth, and from youth to womanhood; then, without reaching old age, translated to Paradise, 'like a tree planted by the rivers of water,' that brought forth its fruit in due season, and whose leaf also withered not, being cut down in its prime, and remembered only as the glory of the place where it grew. There were no extraordinary incidents in her brief existence; she occupied no eminent station in society; she was endowed with no splendid talents; but on account of these very deficiencies (defects they were not) something *more excellent,* yet *attainable by all,* having been found in her, she may be presented as a model to others passing through the same ordinary circumstances, whereby they may form themselves to meet every change till the last; and in that last, be perfectly prepared for a state beyond the possibility of a change for ever."

There is another brief passage which we cannot

forbear to quote: it embodies a meaning which almost every thoughtful individual must have *felt* — perhaps it may be the anticipatory feeling of the reader of this work at the present moment: —

"Towards the close of any book of biography in which we have been peculiarly interested, there is something of apprehension experienced as we approach the last pages; we know the catastrophe which consummates every work of the kind, because the same is the consummation of every human life. Whose heart has not palpitated? whose hand has not trembled, as if it felt a feebler pulse at turning over leaf after leaf? and whose eye has not keenly, eagerly, yet afraid and revoltingly, glanced on to the very line in which the last agony is described, as though it saw the dying look of one who had been 'very pleasant in life,' and from whom, even 'in the volume of the book,' it was hard to be divided?"

Collins was not only gratified by Montgomery's promptitude in writing this essay, which enabled him to anticipate a competition in reprinting the work from the American original, but he was much pleased with the article itself. "It is," said he "an article of much ability and peculiar interest; and you have finely discriminated her character and writings. I have also to express my gratitude for the beautiful and very experimental poem with which you have closed the essay. Oh, the great matter is to love, and be like God!" The "Poem" is that republished under the title of the "Lot of the Righteous." *

July 2. Mr. Holland, having been present with Montgomery at the consecration of St. Philip's Church, accompanied him home to tea. He exhibited six framed engravings, which he had just purchased, partly because they represented scenes in the neighbourhood

* Works, p. 352.

of Sheffield, but mainly as mementos of the artist, David Martin, formerly a pupil with Bewick, at Newcastle, but afterwards connected with Mr. Gales in some publishing speculations. After tea, the poet took his friend with him to the garden which he rented just outside the town. The plat was productive, and neatly kept: but, as appeared then and afterwards, it was little indebted to the owner's personal management; for, as we have before intimated, he was remarkably inexpert with either spade, rake, or pruning-knife. His beds and borders always presented in their season a few rarities, the presents of kind friends, including, especially, some handsome varieties of the dahlia from the gardens at Wentworth House, both before and after the mania for cultivating this fine flower for show or for sale led to such extraordinary and beautiful developments of size, form, and colour under the management of Sheffield floriculturists. It will be seen from the following note that the poet made a return in one quarter at least: —

James Montgomery to Joseph Cooper.

"Sheffield, Jan. 30. 1830.

"DEAR SIR,

"At length I have the pleasure of informing you that I have procured for you, by personal application to our missionary agent in London, some small parcels of *fresh seeds from Labrador*, which shall be delivered to yourself or your order. If I am not mistaken, you have long wanted specimens of this kind, which, however, are very difficult to be obtained; one ship only, our missionary vessel, visiting that lonely region annually. Waiting your directions,

"I am, your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Cooper, Botanical Gardens, Wentworth House."

We introduce the two following letters together, as they refer to the same subject, and explain each other: —

James Montgomery to Mrs. B——d.

"Sheffield, Jan. 4. 1828.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I am exceedingly ashamed that anything which I said this morning to Mr. B. should be the cause of depriving you of the possession of a book on which you set the smallest value; yet I cannot be sorry that your kindness, on a consideration of the peculiar circumstances of the case, should have induced you to make a voluntary sacrifice of the 'Whisperer.' The plain truth is this,—there are here and there, in the heterogeneous contents of its pages, coarse or profane phrases, which I cannot bear to think might hereafter be revived and printed for no other reason in the world than because they were written by *me*. I know not what the indiscretion of friends may do to bring my name into discredit, when I am gone hence and no more seen, by publishing what ought never to have been written at all, and what it will be a sin in them to call up from the dead,—*if I have*, unfortunately, any such friends, who are more to be feared than enemies; and if *I have not*, I shall escape better out of the world than most late authors have done. There is such a rage for 'remains,' that another fear is added to the ordinary terrors of death, in the apprehension of 'posthumous works,' till I, for one, feel sometimes as if I should blush in my grave for what may be done to honour me in this way! I will not attempt to explain the last sentence, but, presuming that you will be able to guess the general import, I beg to say that I reconcile myself to the thought of having so *little impoverished* your library, by the conviction that you will feel much more pleasure in the recollection of having done a generous act, than you ever could have done in the gratification of holding a worthless book, merely because it had become a rarity. At the same time,

in justice to myself and the readers of the 'Whisperer' in the last century, I am honestly desirous of suppressing the work so far as I can, *not* on account of its juvenile extravagances, but because of the few particular expressions to which I have alluded. Had it not been for *these*, I would have left it to its own fate—long ago sealed in oblivion—without much fear of a resurrection to do my memory any great harm. Should it ever be in my power otherwise than by words to testify my gratitude for this obligation, I shall be most happy.

"I am, very truly and respectfully,

"Your obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

James Montgomery to Mrs. B——d.

"Sheffield, July 25. 1828.

"DEAR MADAM,

"I have not forgotten your kindness in giving up a certain volume of my juvenilities (the 'Whisperer'); and though I thanked you heartily at the time, I have long waited for an opportunity of presenting a more substantial pledge of my gratitude under such circumstances as should leave you no room for hesitation in accepting it. I enclose two volumes just published, of which, though I am neither the author nor the editor, the popularity is, in some measure, to depend upon my Introductory Essays. This circumstance entitles me to a number of copies, without expense, for distribution amongst my friends. Will you, therefore, allow me to consider you as one of the latter on this occasion, by accepting the books, viz., 'Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress,' and the 'Memoirs of Mrs. Susan Huntington?' Though I could not presume to acknowledge your delicate sacrifice to my feelings respecting the 'Whisperer,' by offering you what had cost me money, I can frankly offer you these volumes, which have come gratuitously to myself, but which I honestly confess I value too much to bestow otherwise than in the best manner I

can. Bunyan's inimitable work, no doubt, you know well, and may possess already; but the alloy of my Introduction to the fine gold of his Pilgrim will add to the weight, if not to the value, and Mr. Scott's Notes will certainly enhance the latter. The 'Memoirs of Mrs. Huntington' have already been printed four times at least, within a few months, in this country. Though neither you nor I can be expected to subscribe to every sentiment contained in her journal and letters, I am quite sure that you will estimate her talents for doing good, and her piety in exercising them for that purpose, not less than I do; while her simplicity and godly sincerity, her faith, and hope, and love in working out her salvation with fear and trembling, deserve to be held in reverence by all who know anything of their own hearts, and the conflict between sin and grace which is continually carried on in those who have experienced any of the power of the latter.

"Believe me, very faithfully and gratefully,

"Your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

About the middle of this year a series of ten large pictures was exhibited in Sheffield, under the designation of the "Montgomery Gallery." They were founded on the scenery of the "World before the Flood:"* the artist was Mr. J. R. Walker, of Nottingham, who, it was said, painted them for a gentleman of that town for 500 guineas. The compositions, entirely scenic, mostly rendered the text of the poet in an elegant and satisfactory manner, and were very generally admired, on that account especially.

* The subjects are — 1. The Mount of Paradise. 2. Zillah's Bower. 3. The Patriarchs' Glen. 4. An Earthquake at Sunset. 5. The Patriarchs' Sacrifice. 6. Twilight. 7. The Tomb of Abel. 8. Conflagration by Moonlight. 9. The Prelude to the Deluge. 10. The Deluge. After sundry vicissitudes of ownership — and artistic retouching — the paintings are at present the property of Mr. Bailey, of Nottingham, the father of the author of "Festus."

James Montgomery to Miss Gales.

"Aberystwith, Aug. 28. 1828.

"My dear Friend,

"Your letter reached me at Brecon on Saturday evening. I read it to the sound of the harp, but you may guess whether I listened to that national instrument any more than I would have done to a shower of rain against the windows, though it was the first time in my life that I had heard it within the principality, and touched, for aught I know, by the spirit of 'The Bard' himself, for I saw not the minstrel who struck up his music in the passage of the Castle Hotel, just when your paper representative, released from captivity at the post-office by Mr. Hodgson's servant, was found by me on the table after a hasty walk through the town. Your hand touched another harp,—one of which my life-strings are the chords, and from which, indeed, you drew most sweet yet melancholy notes; but do not be alarmed; nothing *is* sweet to me, so strangely am I constituted, unless it be melancholy also. You ran over so many of the springs both of joy and grief in my remembrances of time past, and my anticipations of time to come,—eternity itself included, which I may say is almost ever present with me, like the sky over my head, never changing from its arch of blue immensity, however the horizon may change, as I travel among mountains or over plains,—that I gave myself up to reverie, less upon the things which you had actually named, than thousands of others indefinably allied to them. Into none of these dare I now enter, for if I begin I know not where I may end, nor should I, perhaps, be able to make myself understood even by you, though none could more readily comprehend, or would more generously interpret, my hypochondriacal imaginations.

"I went out immediately, and for two hours gave myself up to the enjoyment of such pleasures of memory and of hope as were consistent with a state of mind which, however disturbed, was exquisitely susceptible of the tranquillising influence which the new scenery and circumstances

that surrounded me were calculated to inspire. The evening was calm and fresh; the little town was all alive, and presented many of the peculiarities that characterise the people and their dwellings in this part of the island, where every sound and sight reminds one of the ages gone by, when the descendants of the true old Britons maintained their mountain fastnesses against all the power of the savages, the Danes and the Normans, who successively overran the rest of the country, and where the living descendants of *those* descendants still maintain their language and their manners, with little variety, notwithstanding their frequent intercourse with such foreigners as Rowland Hodgson and James Montgomery journeying through their picturesque regions in quest of the romantic and the poetic. Of the former there is abundance, an abundance that overwhelms and crowds the mind even to bewilderment,—mountain driving mountain out of remembrance, as wave follows wave on the sea, and few being so distinguished above the rest as to leave an imperishable image in the mind. As for the latter,—'the poetic' I mean,—I have found nothing yet: materials for poetry there have been repeatedly presented to the eye, and suggested to the thought, but no inspiration to give them form; and like dreams they came, lively and ravishing while they lasted, but forgotten when gone, as if they had never been. I think it was you that told me the secret how to remember a dream,—by thinking back upon it immediately on awaking, catching the skirt as it flits into invisibility, and thus retaining it from oblivion. I have often made the experiment, and though without this reflex act of the mind, even if I try what I dreamt of two hours afterwards, I can fix the most trifling incident as long as I please in my memory by one turn to look at it disappearing. (I meant to have applied this dreaming similitude to my neglect of poetic glimpses that have visited me by the way.) By the bye, your letter made me dream—of what, think you?—Eckington! But there was nothing romantic or sentimental, though my mind was all glowing with the sunset of that day which, to most people, is the

most beautiful of life—the day of youth; mine was not so, but your letter brought the best part of it to my remembrance—*the end*, when I began to resign myself to what might befall me in the order of God's gracious providence, rather than to choose any longer for myself, after having chosen so long and so ill through many, many bitter years. Well, but my dream of Eckington. It was nothing of days that are gone, and are a thousand times lovelier in retrospect than they are in reality; nor was it anything of days to come, if I dare contemplate such an association with that place;—it was about something which I hope and which I believe I may prophesy will never happen—it was that Richard and Winifred, the proprietors of your little patrimony there, had become *insolvent*, and I fancied that I should lose a newspaper debt by them! From this preposterous digression, into which you will hardly forgive me for running, I must return to my Saturday evening walk at Brecon. This I might, perhaps, have made entertaining, had I thrown it into the form of my 'Scarborough Journal' just after I got home. Indeed, I tried to do so, but both hand and heart failed. I was so nervous and wearied, that after beginning my letter twice, and spoiling half a page each of two sheets of paper, I was forced to give up and go to bed. From that hour to the present I have not had opportunity to sit down quietly and resolutely to letter-writing; and now I am all unstrung from illness yesterday, and the irritation of noises last night and this morning around me, being Aberystwith races, and Mr. H. and I prisoners here at the head inn, where, for the last eight-and-forty hours, there has been no rest, either out or in doors. But my Brecon walk! Well, I must set off to hunt a mountain, which, out of the inn window, seemed near enough, poetically speaking, if I had shouted to it, to have answered my voice with an echo, and yet it proved to be five miles off, so delusive is distance when measured by such objects. I learned this, indeed, before I set out; and therefore intended to reach only an intervening eminence till I might view the magnificent height—forked like Parnassus, and

supported by peaks only a little inferior to itself—from a point where I could command, at one glance, the whole groupe in their relative proportions. I climbed through a long, close lane, neglecting the occasional loop-holes in the hedges, that I might enjoy at once the scene above, around, and below,—the hills, the woods, the river, and the town. When I had gained the top, I was literally indebted to an anthill for the privilege of peeping above the hedge at first, and the bases and sides of the mountains were so much enlarged by nearness, that the symmetry and elevation were lost or foreshortened, and I was reminded of what I had before observed, that the grandeur of such objects, and their beauty of course, must be seen, not at hand, but sufficiently far off to bring their magnitude down to the miniature of our eye, and their colouring and shape to our confined ideas of harmony and grace. The valley, however, compensated, with its innumerable and minute images, for the disappointment on the part of the mountains. I cannot pretend to particularise here, for all the words in 'Johnson's Dictionary,' in all their combinations, cannot be made to paint a landscape of this kind, or indeed of any kind, in which the multiplicity of little objects constitutes the attraction, and forms the charm that even the pencil cannot touch without breaking it. Brecon, however, being the first true Welsh town that I had seen, had a very peculiar interest to me as I looked upon it from the hill, or rambled through its streets. The houses were seldom more than two storeys high, plastered or whitewashed, with roofs of brown slate, or thatched, and green with moss, or yellow with lichens. The streets are very narrow, having many public-houses in them, and, being Saturday night, town and country people in abundance, crowding about the doors, or revelling within. But what puzzled me most was the perpetual murmur of voices of men, women, and children, on every hand, among which I could rarely catch a sound that I understood, or follow the accents of words that were necessarily strange to my ears. Had I been deaf, I should have had no suspicion that I was in a land where anything but

good plain English was spoken. This expression is not so absurd as it may appear; for the tone and action, and, I may add, the effect of speech of the good folks around me were so natural, that I could scarcely conceive any other reason for not comprehending what they said, except that I heard them imperfectly. This arose from their understanding each other so well, while I really found it as difficult in the streets to make out the meaning of their occasional English as of their own inimitable tongue, that seemed to have an alphabet of its own. Yet everything and everybody appeared to be quicker of apprehension than I was. I smiled to hear a woman talk Welsh to a dog, who perfectly knew what she meant, which he interpreted to me by his obedience,—running out of the way of a corn-cart which a horse was pulling, and the men pushing through a barn door, till the load caught at the side and fell backwards on their heads. They were soon extricated. My next surprise was to find a little girl talking Welsh to her doll, which understood her tender accents, accompanied with more intelligible kisses, as well as I did. This tickled my fancy more than all beside with its seeming absurdity; though the next day a child of my own sex committed a much more flagrant absurdity, by coming up and talking Welsh to *me!* I will only add that, from a house, most probably where they sold *cwru*, though I did not see the sign, I heard a Welsh song. It was a wild and powerful voice, that, like a torrent, sounded as if it could have gone on for ever without wearying, and almost without varying; yet there was something very plaintive in it; for rough, and loud, and stern as the tones were, the strain was in the minor key, and I thought might have been a lay of Taliessen. Thank you for all your information about Worcestershire, most of which made me wiser than I was before. I thought not of Butler, and knew not of the treasure found at Little Malvern. But it is a fact that, some years ago, a speculator spent several hundred pounds on one of the hills in search of gold! I bought for sixpence a specimen of the ore which has as much of gold in it as the whole mountain

contains, I dare venture to say. You mention Lord Lyttelton and his monody. On the day that I wrote last I had the honour to pay a visit to *Lady Lyttelton**, the widow of that Lord Lyttelton who died half a century ago, according to a warning from a spirit. She is nearly ninety years of age. I must tell you more when we meet. Since we left Malvern, we have travelled through Herefordshire, where we attended seven meetings in five days, and I was glad to flee for refuge to the Welsh mountains. Among these we have been wandering ever since, and expect to wander on for ten days to come. I have no room to say more about them at present. Thank you for your notice of my Essay to 'Mrs. Huntington's Memoirs.' Give my best regards to all whom I would name if I had space. I hope your dear sister and yourself will be sure, whether I write or not, that I am, at all times and everywhere,

"Your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P.S. All was well at Ockbrook a fortnight ago. I have received Mr. Holland's kind letter; he wrongs the *men* of Ross — they are worthy of 'The Man.' Keep my key, and keep my secrets, if you find any; you are welcome to know all! You mention my 'own shire,' and talk of, &c. Believe me, I have been, I am, and shall always be, *nobody* of *nowhere*.

"Miss Gales, Sheffield."

James Montgomery to the Misses Gales.

"Abergele, North Wales, Sept. 5. 1828.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,

"I wrote to Sarah [Gales] from Aberystwith on Thursday last week, and in one of the five or six postscripts to my rambling letter, I requested any communication from Sheffield to be addressed to me at *Carnarvon* (unless

* At Peachfield Lodge, near Malvern.

by a blunder quite natural to a head like mine, crammed with all the mountains in Wales in motion through it—which is about the same thing as that head in motion through those mountains—if I get to the end of this parenthesis, I mean to say, unless I wrote *Carmarthen*, which, however, I think I did not); but neither newspaper nor epistle has reached me yet, though at every stopping-place between Carnarvon and this little town directions were left at the post-office for such to be forwarded. I am not complaining that no letter has been received, because, however earnestly I have desired such a token of your kind remembrance, I could not calculate upon it; but I did reckon fully on the 'Iris' being duly transmitted, especially as that of the former week, if sent at all, has never come to hand. I am not even complaining of this; but I mention the circumstance under an apprehension that my own letter from Aberystwith may have miscarried, and fallen into hands less willing to find good sense and right feeling in it than yours. Be this as it may, please to desire Mr. Blackwell to send the *next* 'Iris' to me at the post-office, Wrexham, Denbighshire; and to forward it on Monday evening, as I know not whether it will not have to hunt me, as I presume its two predecessors have done, and, like them, lose its way in the labyrinths of this inextricable region, where mountains as much resemble clouds in their fantastic forms, as clouds in other countries occasionally resemble mountains in their regular masses; so that it is very probable the 'Iris' has been literally playing the rainbow; and instead of striding to me over the mountains, has lost itself in the clouds. I have, however, seen a copy of the paper of last Tuesday, which Mr. Hodgson received at Conway.*

"At the latter place I looked in vain for any suitable scene for Gray's Bard, whom, we are told, stood—

> 'On a rock, whose haughty brow
> Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood.'

* He composed at Conway the verses entitled "Evening Time," founded on Zech. xiv. 7. Works, p. 336.

It is true that Conway [Castle] is a 'dried specimen' of a genus of fortresses almost extinct in this country, being entirely encompassed with a wall and bastions in a respectably ruinous condition for picturesque effect, and perfect enough to give a good historical idea (if I may call it so) of what an ancient British stronghold was in its glory — I ought rather to say in its terror, when a city was a bastile to its inhabitants, under feudal tyranny, and an annoyance to the adjacent country, which it held in servile subjection, while it was nominally for its protection that it defied all assaults from invading enemies. Thank God! I say, from the ground of my heart, that we have no more need of castles now, than we have of monasteries; our government is more secure without the former, and more strong to defend its subjects, than ever it was with them; and our religion flourishes much better without the latter, than it did when monks and nuns monopolised all the good things of this life which the king and his barons had not previously seized, while the people fed upon the offals and crumbs that fell from the tables of both, which their labour supplied with all the barbarous luxuries of the dark ages, when gluttonous feasting, and furious fighting, and fantastic devotion, constituted the hospitality, the heroism, and the piety of our forefathers.

"On looking back, I find I set out from Conway on this digression, and from the reign of King Edward the First to that 'old' town in 1828. The castle is a most superb structure of mouldering battlements and towers, and only less massy than the rock on which it is founded. I found a single labourer hard at work in one corner, demolishing a part of this base for stones to mend the road, which, to me at least, presented a curious contrast with the weather-worn materials of the bulwarks about, being as sound at every fracture within as when it was created at the beginning, or emerged from the waters of the Flood. Another contrast amused me not a little: just under the mighty walls, on the grass, a child had been erecting a tiny cob-castle of broken cups and saucers, which no doubt would last its time, and

serve the purpose for which its architect had planned and erected its miniature parts. That purpose, I could not help thinking, was not only more harmless, but in itself more laudable than the design for which, some thousand years and more ago, the neighbouring pile had been reared —not that I condemn the heroes and patriots of ages past, when castles were required for the maintenance of liberty and independence, as I have a right to conclude Welsh castles were;—I have no objection against them in their maturity; but I cannot help liking them a hundred times better in their decay. I said that I looked in vain for a suitable station for Gray's *Bard*, to imprecate his curses and utter blasphemies from an eminence worthy of the magnificence of his poetry. A rock I might find; that on which the castle stands left room enough for the minstrel and his harp; but as for 'old Conway's foaming flood,' I saw neither flood nor foam: the tide was down, and the river a petty stream, while the opening towards the sea was as still and as blue as the sky above. Poets have strange powers, which they sometimes exercise as strangely. If I recollect rightly Gray brings Snowdon so near to Conway, that Edward's army are winding their 'toilsome way' down its 'shaggy steeps,' while the bard is pouring out the thunder of his song upon their heads. He must have had a marvellous voice, for that 'old prophetic mountain' must be some twenty miles off at least! Yet I would not have the geography of that noble strain rectified on any account; only after having seen both Snowdon and Conway, the scene must still be laid in the Wales of my imagination.* Reality almost always contradicts or disappoints poetical

* Perhaps, if we compare the language of the poet with the names of places as usually applied by visitors, the criticism is just; but such also appears the description of Gray, when we recollect that the Saxons included under the term "Snowdon" not only the principal mountain, but all the high lands of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway. The words of Matthew of Westminster indicate a similar relation of localities as the Bard: "apud Aberconway ad pedes montis Snowdoniæ."

picturing and impression. At Conway I experienced one of the miseries of travelling: it is a happy thing for me that I can be my own servant—I can't say so much with respect to being my own master!—but I find many advantages in being able to wait upon myself, and do my own errands. In one thing, however, I am miserably at the mercy of those who have no mercy, besides being subject to lamentable inconvenience from not being able at all times to throw myself into their hands. I *cannot shave myself.* At Conway my beard was two days old, and I was restless till I could get rid of it. I had depended for relief here. After running through the half dozen streets that comprise the little fortified town, and discovering no pole projecting from any house, I asked at the inn whether there was a barber in the place? I was immediately answered 'Yes,' and they would send for him. They sent. I waited. The messenger returned with the rueful tidings that the barber had gone from home, leaving all the beards in Conway and Penmanmawr to thrive at their leisure. It was in vain to be angry and tear my beard with vexation; there was no remedy: and long as it was, I was obliged to let it grow twelve miles longer,—that is, another stage,—to Abergele, where I was determined to arrest its progress myself, if I could find no hand more expert than my own to do it there. . . .

"On Monday last, being at Carnarvon, a council was held respecting future operations (the opinions of Thomas and Joseph [Mr. Hodgson's valet and coachman] being duly taken), when it was resolved that Snowdon should be visited. We were told it was ten miles off; but though the highest mountain in Wales (about three-fourths of a mile above the level of the sea), we had sought it in vain all Saturday, from Dolgelly to Bedgelert, and thence to Carnarvon; not being able to understand the marks by which it is to be distinguished; for though the peak is very small, and far elevated above the adjacent eminences, the mountain is so built up of other mountains of stupendous bulk, that, except in peculiar situations, it appears to little advantage over

them; nor in any point, as far as I can learn, does it present an insulated form, which many of its inferiors do, and seem to fill and command both sky and earth with their majestic presence. We set out in a double-bodied gig, with two horses, which carried us about six miles, over roads only fit for Welsh-born steeds and Welsh-made vehicles. Further progress in that way being at length impracticable, we walked about half a mile down a rugged path, at every step barely escaping with our lives. We then took the water in a little boat, rowed by a man and his wife, traversing a lake about three miles in extent, between hills, and gradually rising into bolder and steeper slopes on either side, till we reached the inn at Llanberries, near the foot of Snowdon. The peak of the latter was in a favourable aspect, being frequently quite clear of clouds, and standing alone a single point for an eagle to perch upon, as you might fancy *, and seemingly not more than a mile distant. On inquiry, we were told it was more than five miles off, and that it would require four hours and a half to visit it and return, even if we hired ponies to carry us. It was then two o'clock in the afternoon, but I had no notion of flinching. Waiving dinner, therefore, I got a crust of bread and butter, and immediately set out, accompanied by a guide and Mr. Hodgson's two servants, he choosing to remain where he was till our return. My nag was a very steady good one; the others were asses in horse-skins, and would not budge a foot without beating. The road was so narrow that only one at a time could go on it, and made up generally of loose stones, which no horse unaccustomed to such travelling could step amongst without endangering his knees or his rider's neck. It was hard enough to look to this; but when you consider that the greater part of the way was along the sides of an immense precipice, coming down on the left hand from the clouds, and descending on the right lower than I durst follow them with my eye, lest I should follow them altogether, you ought to think highly of my horsemanship when I tell you that I reached the landing-place, within a quarter of a mile

* The Welsh call it *craigian eryri*, the eagle craig.

of the peak, where the animals are always left, and the adventurers become quadrupeds themselves, — at least we did, — to scale the peak with hands and feet.

"As we had been ascending, I did from time to time look round and beneath on the heights and the hollows, which it would be in vain to attempt to describe. What most affected my head was the sight of enormous mountains divided from Snowdon by fertile valleys watered by streams and little lakes, presenting their broad bare backs *below* me, while the monarch of all still reared his brow with its spiral crown so far *above*, that I was giddy look which way I would; I therefore reserved the full enjoyment of these scenes for our return, intending to walk back, when I should feel myself more secure on my two legs than on my horse's four. But mark the end: during the last mile of our ascent we observed that clouds occasionally wreathed the peak; and when we began to climb the last stage on foot, the vapours grew denser every moment, the wind rose, and the hills and valleys — a whole world of both as they appeared before — were so suddenly lost, that they might have been annihilated; and when we took our stand, leaning against a pile of huge stones on the pinnacle to support ourselves, we could not see ten yards before us, and not one behind us; for on the left hand, the abyss between Snowdon and the opposite ridges was abrupt for many hundred yards, and *out of this* from *below* seemed the wind and the fog to come, the one howling, and the other rushing upwards, and wrapping us in its blue cold breath, that chilled my blood, while I lost all feeling almost in the dreary loneliness of the spot, 3500 feet above the sea, glimpses of which had shown in the haze as we ascended. What was to be done? That was soon answered — Nothing! — for we had no time to wait till Snowdon changed his mind; we were therefore compelled to descend . . . and got safely down. . . .

"I am,

"Your sincere friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Misses Gales, Hartshead, Sheffield."

But if the Snowdonian excursion terminated unsatisfactorily so far as prospect was concerned, the disappointment was more than compensated by an interview with Mrs. Hemans. The amiable poetess thus alludes to the visit of the Sheffield bard, in one of her lively letters, dated Rhyllon, Sept. 18. 1828: —

"I had an interesting visit a few days since from the poet Montgomery, not the new aspirant to that name, but the 'real Peter Bell.' He is very pleasing in manner and countenance, notwithstanding a mass of troubled, streaming, *meteoric-looking* hair, that seemed as if it had just been contending with the blasts of Snowdon, from which he had just returned full of animation and enthusiasm. He complained much in the course of conversation, and I heartily joined with him, of the fancy which wise people have in the present times *for setting one right;* cheating one, that is, out of all the pretty old legends and stories, in the place of which they want to establish dull facts. We mutually grumbled about Fair Rosamond, Queen Eleanor and the poisoned wound, Richard the Third and his hump-back; but agreed most resolutely that nothing *should* ever induce us to give up William Tell."*

He inserted in an album, which might meet the eye of the fair poetess, a memento of his visit and his esteem in these impromptu lines: —

"While the Welsh mountains stand,
And while the billows beat
In thunder at their feet,
Retiring and returning on the strand,
So long thy verse endure, — so long
Be heard the echo of Felicia's song.
"Sept. 8. 1828."

And in a similar book he wrote the following more elaborate inscription: —

* Memorials of Mrs. Hemans, by H. F. Chorley, vol. i. p. 205.

"When land and sea are fled,
And immortality on earth is past,
When Time and Death itself are dead,
While heaven's encircling ages last;
Among the eternal hills,
Washed by the Hyaline's pure tide,
Mixed with the melody of rills
That through the fields of comfort glide,
Where the meek spirits of the blest
Find everlasting rest;
Or by the river clear as crystal flowing,
On whose green banks the trees of life are growing,
May she who sang so well beneath,
A purer, loftier, holier transport breathe,
And with the charm of an immortal voice,
The numbers numberless of saints rejoice,
While angel-tongues their sister-minstrel greet,
And echo from the throne her strains repeat."

Sept. 11. Sir Alexander Johnston called at Montgomery's residence, but not finding him at home, left for him the following note: —

Sir A. Johnston to James Montgomery.

"Sheffield, Tontine Inn, Sept. 12. 1828.

"Sir Alexander Johnston presents his compliments to Mr. Montgomery, and begs to express his regrets that he has not been so fortunate as to find Mr. Montgomery at home.

"As Sir Alexander Johnston is fully aware of the great philanthropy of Mr. Montgomery's character, and of the zeal which he has evinced on every occasion in favour of the abolition of domestic slavery in every part of the world, Sir Alexander Johnston was anxious to take the present opportunity of his passing through Sheffield to pay his respects to Mr. Montgomery, and to explain to him what Sir Alexander thinks will be gratifying to his benevolent feelings, — the great effect which his beautiful poem of the

'West Indies' produced some years ago, upon the sentiments of many of the slave proprietors in the island of Ceylon, who adopted the resolution that was proposed to them by Sir Alexander Johnston, while he was President of His Majesty's Council on that island, to consider as free all children who should be born of their slaves after the 12th of August, 1816; by which resolution the state of domestic slavery, which had existed in Ceylon for three hundred years, will be entirely put an end to in the course of a few years more.

"Sir Alexander Johnston is at present on his way to Scotland: however, as he intends to return from thence to London about the middle or end of next November, he shall certainly make a point of taking Sheffield in his way back, provided there be any probability of seeing Mr. Montgomery. He will consider it as a favour if Mr. Montgomery will be so obliging as to inform him whether he is likely to be in Sheffield about that time.

"Sir A. Johnston's address in Scotland is, Carasallock, near Dumfries."

On Saturday, September 13th, Montgomery returned from his six weeks' tour: he looked well, and appeared cheerful, having much enjoyed the scenery of North Wales, including the bodily exercise required to command its widest scope.

In the month of October, Sir Richard Phillips, the quondam London bookseller, and ex-editor of the "Monthly Magazine," visited Sheffield in the course of a tour which he was then making through the country with reference to descriptive publication. He had lived too long amidst the bustle and business of the great world, and was too little conscious of any feeling at all like diffidence, to allow him to hesitate about calling upon any person whether of rank, genius, or eccentricity, when the success of his project was likely to be thereby promoted. The time selected by the

free and easy knight for his unannounced visitation of Montgomery, was, *Sunday at dinner time.* He was at once asked to sit down and partake of the chickens and bacon which had just been placed on the table; but here was a dilemma: Sir Richard, although neither a Bramin nor a Jew, avowed himself a staunch Pythagorean — he could eat no flesh! Luckily there was a plentiful supply of carrots, and turnips, and — jelly. But was the latter made from calves' feet? Montgomery assured his guest that it was *not;* but, added he, with a conscientious regard for his visitor's scruples — from *ivory dust.* We believe the poet fancied the hypothesis of an animal origin of this viand could not be very obscure: it was however swallowed; the clever bibliopole perhaps believing, with some of the Sheffield ivory-cutters, that elephants, instead of being hunted and killed for their tusks, *shed them* when fully grown, as bucks do their antlers!

Oct. 14. Sir Richard, Montgomery, Mr. Holland, and a Mr. Langley took tea at the house of Mr. Blackwell, the publisher of the "Iris," where the evening was spent very pleasantly, as well as being productive of one or two practical results, to which the poet often alluded in after-years. When Mr. Langley was introduced as an Anglo-Saxon student, Sir Richard hailed him, *more suo,* as "a welcome member of our little *Wittenagemot,*" presently suggesting that an edition of the works of King Alfred would form at once an appropriate monument of the vernacular language of England before the Conquest, a grateful exercise for the skill of an industrious editor, and an acceptable contribution to the literature of the day. The project was so far taken up, that Mr. Langley obtained the patronage of his neighbour, Earl Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Holland wrote a prospectus: but a far different and less honour-

able destiny awaited the learned editor, who died several years afterwards in New South Wales, an involuntary exile from the land of his birth. If, however, Mr. Blackwell did not publish the works of King Alfred, he *did* print the Sheffield portion of the "Tour of Sir Richard Phillips;" and the success with which he baulked the cunning strategy of that practised book-maker, and ultimately got paid for his undertaking, often amused Montgomery, who was privy to the whole proceeding, and had predicted a result more in accordance with a former transaction of his own with the same party.

The operation of Enclosure Acts has ever been an unwelcome if not an inequitable mode of converting an imprescriptive and inalienable heritage of the poor into real estate, statutably held or legally transferable: but not only have the ancient rights of the "bare-worn common been denied" to the man who was thus compelled by law to give up that free pasturage thereon of his cows, his sheep, and his geese, which had immemoriably been enjoyed by his ancestors, and which Goldsmith in his "Deserted Village" so feelingly describes —the time came when even our rural footpaths were devoted to the grasp of the same mercenary legislation. In the autumn of this year, notices for stopping up five pleasant footpaths in the vicinity of Sheffield appeared in the newspapers: this announcement distressed Montgomery, and he wrote and published* an anonymous letter, the only one which we ever knew to proceed from his pen, deprecating the wrong about to be done to himself and others. "I have," said he, "been a *walker*, in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, for more than thirty years; and having still the use of my legs, I am

* Sheffield Iris, Oct. 6. 1828.

very unwilling to lay them wholly aside, as I soon must, or take to the highways, which I am quite as unwilling to do, if a *stop* be not put to the rage for *stopping* footpaths through fields adjacent to the town." He denounces alike the cruelty of turning the pedestrian out of the old paths, and the dishonesty which would appropriate the ground thus selfishly reft from the public; having, as he laments, "had the mortification to see myself, from time to time, excluded from almost all the pleasant fields in which it was the privilege of my youth to ramble at will, in which I have spent hundreds of the most innocent, happy, and profitable hours of my life, but in many of which, neither children shall gather flowers, poet meditate song, nor valetudinarian breathe health any more!" Several other correspondents followed in the same track; but as that which was described by the poet, truly enough, "*every body's property*" for use merely, though *nobody's* for exclusion, no effective formal opposition was offered; the ancient footpaths were obliterated, and the ground appropriated by the owners of the fields through which they passed.

It may not be improper here to give the following passage of a letter from —

John Holland to James Everett.

"Sheffield, Nov. 4. 1828.

"My dear Sir,

"This is Montgomery's birthday, as I dare say you will remember; but I write this letter not so much to tell you that I have just left our bard in his usual health, and surrounded with copies of the 'Annuals,' as to inform you that I have consented at his request to write a memoir — *not* of himself, but — of the late Rev. John Summerfield, an extraordinary young preacher, with whom, I believe, you

were somewhat acquainted, at least during his visit at Sheffield, when the Wesleyan Conference was last held here. Our friend first mentioned the subject to me five months ago, showing me at the same time a letter which he had just received from Dr. Townley*, urging him to undertake the work; which, indeed, he would gladly have done, had the prospect of remuneration to the friends of the deceased been such as to justify him in accepting their offer. When I called to-day he invited me up stairs into his 'den,' as he called his study, and showed me a bundle of MSS. and

* "A memoir being loudly called for, his [Summerfield's] near relative, James Blackstock, Esq., of New York, strongly requested me to draw up some account of him. To this request, powerfully urged by Mr. Sands, of Liverpool, I reluctantly yielded so far as to allow the papers of the deceased to be sent over. These have been received; but the decease (alas!) of my best earthly friend — my dear, incomparable wife — overwhelmed my feelings, and prevented my attempts to proceed, until my appointment to the office of one of the General Secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society obliged me to relinquish the object altogether. It is, therefore, at the earnest request of his *Transatlantic* friends and relatives, strongly seconded by our mutual friend Mr. Eastburn, of New York, who requests me to use his name with that of Mr. Blackstock, to entreat you to rescue the memory of the excellent, amiable, and generous Summerfield from oblivion, by compiling a memoir of him. Mr. Blackstock begs me to say that any expense which may be incurred Mr. Sands, of Liverpool, is authorised to meet; — remuneration, I am sure, would be gladly met by Mr. Blackstock. The papers of the deceased, with letters, public testimonies, &c., I shall be happy to transfer to your order. Now, my dear sir, what shall I say to induce you, amid your numerous and important engagements, to undertake the memoir of this interesting youth? Had I been more intimately known to you, I should have used every plea of sympathy and friendship. There is, however, a stronger plea — England, America, and Ireland are looking for a memoir; and I trust the kindness of one whose benevolence never tires when worth has claims, will listen to the desire of the friends of departed piety and youthful zeal and charity, and snatch from forgetfulness the name of one whose ardent charity induced an early death." — *Townley's Letter.*

other materials for the Life of Summerfield, which he had received from New York, *viâ* London, on my account. As he wished to look over the documents while in his hands, he was very anxious that I should be made aware of their number and character; and when I asked him if he would condescend to give me his advice on any point where I might need it, he replied that he would very gladly do that, if I would condescend to ask for it. I explained to him my plan of the work, with which he entirely concurred. Having settled *business* matters, we turned to the 'Annuals,' and enjoyed a glance at their contents, admiring especially the exquisite engravings in every volume, the poet not failing to say a kind word in commendation of the 'Forget Me Not' of his old school-fellow Shoberl.* . . .

"I am, dear Sir,

"Yours very sincerely,

"JOHN HOLLAND.

"Mr. James Everett, Manchester."

* Mr. Shoberl died March 5. 1853, after having spent the greater part of a long and laborious life in the service of literature. The "Forget-me-Not" originated by him, was the unostentatious type of that variety of "annuals" which formed so conspicuous a feature in every list of new books about the period referred to in the text.

CHAP. LXV.

1829.

THE "HOLY ANGELS."—PHRENOLOGY.—EPITAPH ON REV. D. TYERMAN. —LETTER TO G. BENNET,—TO SIR J. MACKINTOSH,—TO THE REV. BARNABAS SHAW.—"OLNEY HYMNS."—MISSIONARY MEETING AT STOCKPORT.—CONVERSATION.—JONATHAN MARTIN.—SIR WILLIAM JONES.—LETTER TO EDWARD FARR.—INTERVIEW WITH JARED SPARKES.—LETTER FROM MRS. GALES.—"LIFE OF SUMMERFIELD."—WALTON'S "ANGLER."—LETTERS FROM AND TO MISS ROWNTREE.—FAMILY PRAYER-BOOKS.—"PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."—LETTER FROM SOUTHEY.—KLOPSTOCK'S "MESSIAH."

"ALL that of angels God to man makes known,
Here by the light of his pure word is shown;
'Tis Jacob's dream;—behold a ladder rise,
Resting on earth, but reaching to the skies;
Where Faith the glorious hierarchies may trace,
Abroad in Nature, Providence, and Grace;
Here the stone pillow and the desert sod
Become the gate of heaven—the house of God;
Put off thy shoes, approach with awe profound;
The place whereon thou stand'st is holy ground."

On holy ground Montgomery found himself thus standing at the beginning of the present year. The foregoing lines formed a motto on the title-page of a treatise on the "Holy Angels," by his friend, the late Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq., of Raithby Hall, in Lincolnshire, which appeared posthumously in 1826; and the substance of which the poet was anxious to embody in rhyme. This work he ultimately accom-

plished in his poem entitled the "Chronicle of Angels,"* which is "most respectfully inscribed to Mrs. Brackenbury," an appropriate invocation to the "spirit made perfect" of her husband, preceded by the above lines, forming an introduction to the narrative. In a similar strain of piety are the verses entitled the "Sand and the Rock,"† without date, but originally printed in aid of the funds for some charitable object in Liverpool.‡

In the early part of January the celebrated Dr. Spurzheim delivered a series of ten lectures on Phrenology, in Sheffield: they attracted considerable attention, and excited anew the discussion which had previously led to the promulgation of Montgomery's strictures. These, with the author's permission, were now reprinted in the "Iris;" and the following passage, which may be considered as his creed on the relation between the discoveries of science and the

* Works, p. 235. † Ibid, p. 234.

‡ There was a story connected with the original conception of the second part, which ought not, perhaps, to be lost. When on one occasion Montgomery inquired of his brother's wife what became of "Tommy Dutton," the verse-making boy whom he had known at Fulneck school, she mentioned that the father of the youth once gave her an account of an impressive dream which he had. It was to this effect:—he fancied that he had fallen into a horrible pit, down which he "seemed to plunge through space," toward "the gulf of hell which yawned beneath." While thus sinking, he cast his eyes up, and beheld our Saviour, seated in glory upon his throne; at the same time he thought if he could but touch Him he should be rescued; and, accordingly, making a mighty effort, he succeeded in laying hold of the hand of the glorious personage of the vision, and instantly awoke in the rapturous feeling suddenly created by such a rescue. *Holland:* "That was decidedly the dream of a Moravian." *Montgomery:* "It was, sir." It will be found that the imagery of that good man's vision is strikingly embodied in the poem above named.

grounds of revealed religion, will show how fairly and fearlessly he recognised the irrefragable compatibility of physical and scriptural truth: —

"With materialism and immaterialism I have nothing to do. I believe in God, the author and upholder of all things, as he has revealed himself in his word; and I believe in the immortality of the soul upon the same Divine authority, independent of the arguments which may be deduced in support of that doctrine from the nature and capacity of the spirit that is in man, to which the breath of the Almighty hath given understanding. Now the evidence of revealed religion is of a kind so utterly distinct from all the demonstrations of physical science, that no possible discovery in pursuit of the latter can come in contact with it; the one being on a subject solely apprehensible by the understanding and the affections, while the other is the analysis of substantial forms, which may be seen, handled, or otherwise made palpable to the senses, and of which nothing can be surely predicated but what is thus capable of practical proof. Wherefore, till the mind itself can be laid bare by the anatomist's knife, and the operation of thought exhibited naked to the bodily eye, I cannot be afraid of the appearance of any truth which Philosophy can bring from the arcana of the universe. None of these can prove the *negative* of the question, while the *affirmative* (without being in contradiction to them) rests on testimony which can never be invalidated in a dissecting room, any more than the reality of virtue, justice, truth, knowledge, genius, taste, can be exploded there, for want of their visible presence in dead carcases. Let Truth, therefore, be sought, wherever God hath hidden her, and whenever she is found she will add to our knowledge of Him."

But neither discussions on the new cerebral philosophy, nor even speculations on the ministry of the Holy Angels, — a more congenial theme to our poet, — probably occupied his thoughts at this time half so

gratefully as the anticipated pleasure of soon welcoming his friend George Bennet back to his native shores. The worthy missionary, having already reported the death of his colleague at Madagascar*, and having also attended the funeral of King Radama, which exhibited such an unparalleled display of barbaric extravagance, had been compelled to flee from the island, and had now reached the Cape of Good Hope on his way to England. From thence he wrote to Montgomery, who replied as follows: —

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, Jan. 29. 1829.

"My dear Friend,

"Mr. Hodgson has just shown me your letter, which announces the long-prayed-for intelligence that in a few days we may hope to see you at home, who have never been from home to us in our affections, which have followed you over land and sea to the ends of the earth. I write by return of post, and in compliance with your request I add

---

* In the Independent chapel at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, there is a mural monument, with the following inscription, from the pen of Montgomery: —

"In memory of the Rev. Daniel Tyerman, their first pastor, and for seventeen years a faithful minister of the Gospel in this place, the church and congregation inscribe this tablet. He died at Madagascar, on his way home from a missionary visit, of more than seven years, to the South Sea Islands, &c., on the 30th July, 1828.

"'The covenant of grace' shall stand
When heaven and earth depart:
On this he laid his dying hand,
And clasped it to his heart.
In a strange land, when sudden death
Stopt his unfinished race,
This was the plea of his last breath—
'The covenant of grace.'"

a few lines to Chantrey, who, if he be at home, and well enough, will be glad, for your own sake, to show you his treasures. If not, please to give the introductory note to Mr. Allan Cunningham, *the poet*, who is the superintendent of his works, and whom you will find an admirable Cicerone, and an amiable as well as ingenious man. I have written a word or two on the back of the leaf to him. I do not recollect the precise address of Chantrey, but it is somewhere near Pimlico; he belongs to all England, and a letter to him without place ought to find him, from whatever quarter it might be directed. I am not acquainted with any London portrait painter, except Mr. Jackson, the Royal Academician*, who ranks very high, and is (I believe) a pious man in connection with the Wesleyan Methodists. His terms, of course, are very high, his reputation enabling him to command such. As the original is so soon to be in Sheffield, I may say there is a very able young artist here who (I think) would satisfy both yourself and the directors with such a copy of your face as he would make. I have no room to add more than that we shall anxiously await your arrival, and pray that you may long be spared to serve your Lord at home as you have abroad.

"Your friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq.,
at the London Mission House, Austin Friars, London."

It need hardly be said that two such men as Montgomery and Sir James Mackintosh would entertain a high respect for each other's character; but it may be mentioned that to the accident of a misdirected letter the parties were eventually indebted for direct avowals of mutual esteem. The poet, having explained the mistake alluded to, took occasion at the same time to express his sentiments of personal regard for the

* Who, as we shall afterwards see, painted a portrait of Mr. Bennet. We believe no bust of him was executed.

honourable gentleman with whose political and literary labours he had long been acquainted; to which Sir James, after assuring his correspondent that he need not have taken any trouble in the matter, added —

"I am, however, very truly gratified by any incident which procures me the pleasure of correspondence with such a person as you, whom I have long well known and highly prized. I should not deserve any part of your commendation if I were not much pleased by it. It is a great and an unexpected gratification to me to find, that a person of your mind, and especially of your moral feeling, placed at a distant point of view from mine, and looking at objects through a different medium, should concur with me on many of those 'difficult and questionable points,' as you justly call them, which in the last sixteen years have divided the best men in political opinion. The gratification is very much enhanced by the sincerity with which you intimate your difference on some points."

The lines alluded to in the following letter are those entitled "A Cry from South Africa:"*—

James Montgomery to the Reverend Barnabas Shaw.

"Sheffield, Feb. 9. 1829.

"DEAR SIR,

"You are quite welcome to send the lines which I wrote in your album to the 'Methodist Magazine,' with such an introduction as you or the editor may deem most likely to promote pecuniary contributions towards your chapel fund, for it is only in the hope that *your* hope in this respect may not be disappointed, that I consent to the publication of my rhymes. I had reserved them, in my own mind, for another purpose; but I cannot refuse them to the service for which they were originally dedicated, when thus solicited by you, though it

* Works, p. 341.

will cost me the pains of working something else, equal in length, out of my exhausted brain, in the course of a few months. Give my best regards to Mrs. Shaw; and may 'the good will of Him that dwelt *in the bush*' be with you both, as hitherto, even till you reach the brink of Jordan, and thence look back upon all the way which he hath led you through the wilderness, — a wilderness which, whenever he hath been with you by his invisible presence, blessing and making you blessings, already begins to rejoice and to blossom as the rose! If you see any of our Moravian missionaries in South Africa, pray tell them that I should esteem it a great favour if they could send me any roots or seeds of splendid or curious plants, and that the cause of the missions might be served by attention to this point. My best regards to Dr. Townley, and please to say to him that my friend Mr. Holland is diligently, and I hope successfully, prosecuting the work entrusted to him.

"I am, very truly,

"Your friend and servant,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"P. S. I shall give this sheet of paper, as it is, to Mr. Holland, in hope that he will employ the other leaf with something that shall make slaves, Hottentot and Brahmin, call him blessed.

"Rev. B. Shaw, Wesleyan Mission House, London."

John Major, the publisher, having projected an illustrated edition of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," to which he was anxious to prefix "a few copies of verses by living poets, to the memory and merits of honest John," wrote to Montgomery soliciting "a sonnet, or the like." To coincide with a recognition of the merits of the "Delightful Dreamer," in any form, was always a gratification with him; and he immediately composed and transmitted the following lines, forming

three sonnets: whether from the failure of contributions, or some other cause, the book, in this form, never appeared; nor are the compositions themselves included in any edition of our author's works: —

"*An aged Pilgrim's Retrospect.*

"In Memory of John Bunyan.

"A little Child, on life's long Pilgrimage,
Delightful Dreamer! I set out with Thee;
And Thou hast borne my spirit company
From youth to manhood, manhood to old age;
Watching and warning me, from stage to stage,
What Guides to follow, what Deceivers flee,
And how to fight assured of victory,
Though war against me men and demons wage.
Yes, I have known, and felt, and suffered all,
That tempts or thwarts the Pilgrim on his way,
Have proved how bitter 'tis to go astray,
How hard to climb, how perilous to fall;
Now halting, ere I tread '*the Enchanted Ground*,'
I look behind, before me, and around.

"Yonder '*the City of Destruction*' lies
Beneath a cloud with fiery vengeance red;
'*The Palace Beautiful*,' in purer skies,
Lifts to mid-heaven its towered and bannered head;
But from the Valley* at its foot, arise,
And that beyond†, with Death's broad wings o'erspread,
Apollyon's yells, and *Christian's* doleful sighs,
And groans of Spirits lost, from Tophet's bed:
Through these I passed, encountered many a snare,
Faced flames of martyrdom, where *Faithful* died,
Yet on a pleasant '*Bye-Path*,' lured aside

* Of "Humiliation." † Of "The Shadow of Death."

Into the grasp I fell of *Giant Despair*,
Who like a lion dragged me to his lair,
Where, long and loud, for help in vain I cried.

"But, at the point to die, *Hope* found '*the Key*
Of Promise,' at whose touch wide open sprung
Bolts, bars, and portals,—out I flew, and sung,
Like a caged sky-lark, suddenly set free:
Now from *the Shepherds' Mountain-tops*, I see
The '*flocks of Zion*' feeding, old and young,
And '*Zion's City*,' dim, yet overhung
With splendour unsupportable to me.
Back to '*the Cross*,' where first my peace was sealed,
I turn mine eyes,—it darts a single ray,
A clew of light, through all '*the Narrow Way*;'
Past, Present, Future, are at once revealed.
Press on, my Soul! what now thy course shall stay?
No foe can conquer thee, unless thou yield."

About the commencement of this month appeared Montgomery's "Introductory Essay" to a neat edition of the "Olney Hymns," published by Collins of Glasgow. Our author was accustomed to speak of it as one of the most elaborate productions of his pen, in its class; and when we recollect his threefold sympathy — 1. with the subject; 2. with the poetical, and 3. with the clerical contributor to this book, we are prepared to be both interested and instructed; nor are we disappointed. We do not, however, think this the most successful of Montgomery's essays: and this disparity may be attributed to the fact, that he has elsewhere dwelt largely on the genius of Cowper, and the requirements for hymn writing. The "Essay" commences with sketches of the strikingly contrasted lives of the Rev. John Newton and William Cowper, to the period of their providential meeting and residence at Olney under the

affecting circumstances which led to their joint production of those deeply evangelical "Hymns," which must for ever embalm the memory of their Christian friendship, and connect with a peculiar charm the appellation of their common dwelling-place. "On a small island, covered with palm-trees, lying off the western coast of Africa, visited by none but slave ships, in the year 1746 there lived a young man of respectable English parentage." These words are the opening of an abstract of one of the most striking autobiographies in the language, even though not viewed in the light which the remarkable religious character of the author sheds upon it. "One day, in the month of October, 1763, a sufferer under the most deplorable of human maladies was brought to the house of a medical practitioner, at a small town, in a midland county of England, and left under his care." Every reader, at least every intelligent Christian reader, is prepared to recognise in the foregoing sentence the prelude to the religious history of the man who has combined piety and poetry in strains of sweetness and elegance only rivalled by those of the bard whose life we are writing. Into the particulars of the friendship of Newton and Cowper, as glanced at in the Essay, or the remarks which it contains on "joint-stock authorship" in general, we do not enter; but we must say, that in a striking passage, we think our author, rather dexterously, we do not say unwisely, evades the force of a momentous consideration, than satisfactorily disposes of it. "It has often," he remarks, "been ignorantly or insidiously said, that Cowper's connection with Newton was unfortunate for himself; for had he fallen under the influence of some other person of equal piety, but less hardihood in holding and enforcing certain doctrinal tenets, his own hope in the promises of the Gospel might never have

failed, nor his reason, on that point, been utterly perverted, — not only in the cheerless days of mental alienation, but when on every other subject his faculties were clear and his faith orthodox. What *might* have been, if what *was* had not happened, it is in vain to speculate. The contingencies of any one hypothetical event lie far beyond the reach of created intellect." Very true; but is all speculation upon any possible contingency therefore unprofitable or unlawful? Surely not. With reference to the abstract basis or the practical bearing of "certain doctrinal tenets" held and enforced by the curate of Olney and thousands of other good men, or even of their probable effect on the amiable author of the "Task," we merely wish to say here, that they are as amenable to discussion as any other related topics, unless, indeed, man is to apply his common sense or exercise his highest intellect to perceive the connection between cause and effect in all matters except that in which it is of the greatest importance, and often most palpable, — the Influence of Religious Doctrine on the Human Mind. Of the "Olney Hymns" themselves, we entirely agree with the Essayist, that they "ought to be for ever dear to the Christian public, as an unprecedented memorial, in respect of their authors, of the power of divine grace."

Feb. 16. Montgomery went to Stockport, and took part in a Methodist Missionary Meeting: the chapel was crowded, and the address of the poet was listened to with deep interest. Mr. Everett, who was then residing in Manchester, gladly welcomed his friend to that town; and afterwards accompanied him to dinner at Platt Hall, the residence of James Fernley, Esq. The conversation turned generally on the object and influence of missions in connection with the success of the gospel — topics of paramount interest at the moment.

He was pleased with an old volume of Quarles's works, which was shown to him by Mr. Everett, as it contained the "Feast of Worms," which he had not seen before. De Foe, he said, was "the Cobbett of his day: his 'Hymn to the Pillory' is a remarkable production, but exceeding coarse in some passages." The exhibition of an old copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress" led Montgomery to reiterate his customary expressions of admiration of the piety and genius of Bunyan; and also to remark that he had postponed the execution of his intended Essay on the "Holy War," for the purpose of writing an Introduction to the Journal of the Rev. David Brainard, a remarkable book which he was then reading, with reference to making an abridgment of it to be published by Collins. The whole of the matter he considered very precious, as viewed in special connection with the mind and labours of the author; but most readers, even decidedly religious readers, found in it too great a degree of sameness considering its bulk. He was pleased to learn from Mr. Everett that the "Memoirs of Mrs. Huntington" had sold well in Manchester.* He spoke of Pollok's "Course of Time" as containing many very striking passages, some of which, he thought, appeared as if they had been very carefully elaborated by the poet: the principal defect of the poem was its want of plan; the reader could scarcely recognise either time, place, or action; still, it was an extraordinary work, and contained diversified excellences, in its matter, of a high character. The history of its publication was, he said, somewhat remarkable: Collins, who knew Pollok well, had refused to give him 50*l.* for the poem: Professor Wilson then read it,

* Four editions of this work were printed and sold in rapid succession.

and advised Blackwood to undertake it on the condition of half profits: he had the means of recommending it; and a still deeper interest was created by the almost simultaneous death of the author. The "Eclectic Review" helped it decidedly; "while the loftier of our critics," said he, "have not even yet deigned to notice it." Robert Montgomery being mentioned, two booksellers were named (one at York, the other at Leeds), who had each been misled by the disingenuousness of an advertisement, to order a dozen copies of his poem under the impression that it was by the Sheffield poet. He said he believed Wilson was the reviewer of "Prose by a Poet," and also of the "Pelican Island," in Blackwood; though Mr. Everett differed from him as to the notice of the later work.

The conversation then turned on the recent fire in York Minster, and the proposals for its restoration. Montgomery said the Methodists had been very anxious to disavow connection with the incendiary, but, as he thought, without success; nor was the act, however sad and deplorable, in any way discreditable to *them:* Jonathan Martin was, no doubt, deranged. Mr. Everett thought a person might be so far *eccentric*, or a *fanatic*, as to perpetrate irrational acts, and yet not be *deranged* in the ordinary sense of the term. *Montgomery:* "That is, he may be deranged on some one point; in fact, be a monomaniac. I recollect a case of the kind which once came under my own observation: a decent, religious woman came into Miss Gales's shop and inquired for me; on being introduced to her, she said, 'Mr. Montgomery, take your pen, and write what I dictate.' I soon found that she wished me to record her prediction to the effect that the world would come to an end in three years. On my declining to become her amanuensis, she told me that she had been at the church, and

had not only made a similar communication to the clergyman, but had offered to ratify her sincerity with her 'sacramental oath.' I certainly did not dispute her sincerity, or even her piety, but I did doubt her sanity." *Everett:* "Martin certainly proceeded rationally enough about his work, so far as his own personal security and the accomplishment of his felonious design were concerned." *Montgomery:* "It is one of the curious characteristics of insanity, that a person so afflicted will proceed to the attainment of a mischievous object with a remarkable degree of cunning and caution; and will sometimes reason very logically on false or even absurd premises." He thought the reparation ought not to be on the old model: perhaps it might be done in some better way. Mrs. Fernley said she should like to see the cathedral restored to its original state. *Montgomery:* "So should I, if that were possible: but do what you will, the work must still be *new*, as a copy; it may become *old*, but it never can become *original*."*

Montgomery spoke in high terms of the Rev. Barnabas Shaw, the laborious and enterprising Wesleyan Missionary in South Africa: he described him as uniting piety, perseverance, and quiet observation, with simplicity and integrity in a remarkable degree. His wife, too, was a noble-minded as well as a much-enduring woman: he had done what he could to produce a due estimate of her character at missionary meetings: she would be remembered, as she deserved to be, for ages to come. On one memorable occasion especially, she played the Christian heroine bravely, when her husband, like Egede, the venerable Danish missionary to the Indians, hesitated for a moment to encounter the perils

* The restoration was effected as nearly as possible according to the original type, in design and execution.

of the wilderness, she at once cheered and confirmed his wavering resolution by her own decisive utterance of "We will go!"

Feb. 19. Mr. Everett met Montgomery at dinner at Mr. Harrison's, at Ardwick: he had just been to the Moravian establishment at Fairfield, which he had never visited before, and was grieved at the apparently stagnant condition of the community there. *Rev. T. Lessey:* "Methodism possesses more activity and energy than Moravianism; the patience, endurance, and perseverance of the latter making it better adapted for success among the heathen abroad, than among the population of the British Islands." *Montgomery:* "Yes; the comparison of our numbers at home and abroad proves *that:* your Methodism, sir, is like electricity in its action; our Moravianism acts more like galvanic influence." It was remarked, that the Brethren live very much insulated from the world, even in England. *Montgomery:* "It was much more so during my boyhood, when I used to look out of the windows at Fulneck upon that world beyond, into which I afterwards so obstinately threw myself headlong." He said that in his opinion Sir William Jones had been made an important instrument in the hands of God to facilitate the acquisition of Oriental dialects among the missionaries, though involuntarily on the part of that learned man himself, who certainly had no such design. But that sacred language, which the Bramins had always kept so close, and which after so much difficulty and expense they at length taught him, was a venerable mother-tongue, the parent of several others, and which, like a queen-bee, may be still difficult to catch, but once fairly caught, the possession of the subject-swarm is certain."

James Montgomery to Edward Farr.

"The Mount, Sheffield, March 13. 1839.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am almost fretted out of the little meekness that remains to me after the wear and tear of more than threescore years, principally by literary clients who think because they often see my name in print, and now-a-days (not as formerly when it was cast out as evil both by party-men and critics) generally with some mark of approval or commendation attached to it, that there must needs be a potency in it not only to command fame and fortune for the owner, but to recommend all who can secure the sanction of it in any way to the same enviable rewards of rhyming labours. 'All is not gold that glitters.' Had not a bountiful Providence otherwise loaded me with benefits, in my humblest estate, equal to my few wants, and latterly enabling me to perform certain relative duties beyond these, poetry would not have enriched me. It found me poor, and it would have kept me so to the end, unless I had pursued its reveries in a very different path from that which I chose after the folly and madness of youth had taught me that 'all was vanity and vexation of spirit,' by the brief and bitter experience which I had, while, in seeking the honour that cometh from man, and the plaudits of the world, I was following the sight of my own eyes, and the desires of my own deceitful and desperately wicked heart. Whether 'fame and fortune' would have been mine in a greater proportion had I otherwise practised my art, I know not, and regret not to remain ignorant; but having proved for myself that 'the way of transgressors is hard,' I am deeply and humbly thankful that, as a poet at least, I endeavoured to depart from it before an accelerated bias had carried me onward to irretrievable ruin in it. It is not that I am unwilling to aid young aspirants in their early exertions to deserve the distinctions which are yet conferred on a few of the greatest of our fraternity from whom they cannot be withheld even in this steam-going age, but because I *have* the will and *not* the

power to serve them. Hence, instead of cheering them on in their course, I am compelled in honesty and truth to warn them against too great reliance either on their own talents however promising, or the patronage of the public however liberally-performing in those splendid cases which are the exceptions and not the usage of the arbitrary rule in the Chancery of Parnassus, wherein woe to the man who has a suit! Whatever be the equity of his cause, it may last him — not to say it may cost him — his life; unless he abandons it after the first decree made either in his favour or against him — for of two evils the last is the lesser: if the judgment be against him, he has only lost what he *intended* to win; if he wins, what does he do? retire with gains? No, he hazards another stake, when it is a hundred to one but he loses what he *had* got, and thus is not merely disappointed but dishonoured. But I am running away from you and your letter while I am lamenting over other correspondents and their epistles, which I am obliged to answer by breaking to their hearts the promises which they themselves made to their hopes when they determined to make me their counsellor and their guide on their journey up 'the steep,' so 'hard to climb,' 'where Fame's proud temple shines from far.' Though you were in some respects one of this number, and I may have more than once made your heart ache with the discouragements which I have in compassion as well as in sincerity thrown in your way as a candidate for poetical honours, yet as you have other views and other resources in your literary exercises and experiments, I may conscientiously bid you go forward, and congratulate you on having chosen a better part, in your commendable purposes to benefit your generation, while you are indulging your genius, according to its capacities and opportunities, than by concentrating its energies, and perhaps wasting them on the profitless labours of a versifier. You have been happy also in having apparently formed a connection with a publisher of that standing and respectability which affords you the chance of

an introduction to a circle or class of readers both numerous and influential; while the subjects (those in prose, I mean) on which you have hitherto written are adapted to please *two* generations, — the *reigning* and the *rising*, whatever be their lot beyond; for as posterity will care very little for any of us except some two or three, we need care as little for it: its favour would come too late to make us vain, and its neglect will not break our hearts in the grave. . . . Don't be alarmed; I am not censuring but counselling, having had no little experience in matters of this kind, and wishing to benefit you by a lesson which has cost me dear. On no theme, whether in prose or rhyme, ought we to lavish *all* our thoughts much less *all* our words, no more than all our *good* thoughts in *corresponding* words, but select the best only of each. Without literally, or rather servilely, adhering to this rule, yet making it the guide of your pen in composition, you will gradually acquire a clear, spirited, and comprehensive diction that will greatly enhance the value of your productions . . . . I am truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. Edward Farr, Iver, near Uxbridge."

In one of his later letters to Mr. Farr, the poet reiterates a lamentation which occurs in substance in other portions of his correspondence at this period: —

"The penny-post licence of letter-writing, in this view [the facility of epistolary inundation], has been no small calamity to me, —just in proportion as it has been a blessing, by giving me to feel the warmth of many strangers' hearts, which nevertheless require more of the fire of mine than I can give out in due course, for I carry no inextinguishable, inexhaustible lamp in my bosom, at which others without number may kindle their flames, and leave it no fainter or dimmer. So much for egotism. A word for yourself. I am glad to learn that you are sufficiently encouraged to proceed in your literary labours, amidst all difficulties, and at least to keep the ground you gain. The

valleys below Parnassus are far more worthy of cultivation than its bleak though magnificent peaks, or even its luxuriant slopes. Few can establish themselves on the latter, and fewer reach the former, especially at this time, when a perpetual fog rests upon them; and if a greater than Homer were to scale the utmost pinnacle, not many eyes in this world of money-hunters and utilitarians of every shade of colour *not* in the rainbow, would be turned towards the phenomenon."

March 28. Montgomery sent for Mr. Holland to come and sit with him awhile; he was very unwell, and came down stairs with a brown velvet cap on his head. He said the Rev. Jared Sparkes, the author of the Lives of Ledyard, Washington, &c., had recently called upon him, and he was even yet suffering from hoarseness, in consequence of talking more than he ought to have done to his American visitor; adding, "I should have liked you to have seen him: he was a steady, intelligent, literary man, whose conversation you would have enjoyed, as I did. He appears to be well qualified for the execution of the works upon which he is engaged, and in connection with which he visits this country and France." Montgomery spoke highly of Ledyard's well-known "Praise of Woman," as "a noble testimony in favour of the fair sex."* Jonathan Martin, the incendiary of York Minster, was mentioned as having, on one occasion, along with three or four others, prevented the blowing up of a ship at sea; this gave rise to anecdotes of other persons who had performed similar acts of intrepidity. *Holland:* "Mr. Cowley told me, that while serving on board a ship of war, he once saw the cook prevent the explosion of a shell, which was thrown

* The well-known testimonies of Ledyard and Mungo Park on this subject are declared by Mr. De Quincy to be "merely one-sided truths."

on board during an action, by clapping the butter, with which he happened to be passing at the moment, upon the burning fuse. Did you know Caleb Hartley, the veteran who, during the siege of Gibraltar, took a lighted shell out of the laboratory, and threw it over the rampart, where it exploded; and for which action he received the thanks of General Elliot?" *Montgomery:* "Yes, I remember him very well; he was a Sheffield man, and died at Brightside in 1816. A person who had once seen the old soldier could not easily forget him: he was a fine, tall, upright fellow, with a face that would not have disgraced an old Roman. He used to take my newspaper, and died considerably in my debt; but I forgave him this, for the sake of his bravery."

Mr. Sparkes presented to Montgomery the following letter, which pleasingly recalls the name of a worthy woman, with whose peculiar trials Montgomery was, as we have seen, called upon to sympathise at an early period of that literary career which *she* probably in some degree influenced: nor would we overlook the tone of respect and kindness in which she writes: —

Mrs. Gales to James Montgomery.

"Raleigh, U. S., Jan. 24. 1828.

"My long-tried Friend,

"These few introductory lines will be given to your hand by a valued personal friend, Mr. Sparkes, of Boston.

"I have a farewell letter from him previous to his voyage to England and France, for the purpose of examining historical documents, relative to this country, to complete his materials for the extensive and important work which I mentioned to you, or rather to our sisters, in a late letter.

"This introduction is written at his own express desire; he says, 'I shall travel north, and be in Sheffield, and should be much obliged if you or Mr. Gales will give me a

letter to Mr. Montgomery. I know I could not visit him under more favourable auspices.' He is indeed, my dear friend, from repeated conversations and letters, as well acquainted with your private virtues as your literary talents.

"I know not an individual on this side the Atlantic with a more congenial mind, that I could introduce to your acquaintance. A complete classical scholar, and versed in modern languages, a man of science and profound erudition, he adds to them a pure and popular taste in composition. His 'North American Review' is well known and freely circulated in Europe, and his theological writings are eminently esteemed.* He has recently published a 'Life of Ledyard,' the celebrated African traveller, the editorship of which has added to his literary fame.

"But were he only a plain individual, without claim to public pre-eminence, I would introduce him to you, my friend, as one whose private virtues, whose unpresuming manners, and whose kindness of disposition merit a cordial and friendly reception.

"My dear husband, according to his usual habits, is immersed in business, and employs his helpmate's leisure to write to you on behalf of *his friend—my* dear friend too; for I know no one whom I consider more so than Mr. Sparkes.

"Farewell, my friend. I hope this will find you well; and you will in heart, if not in words, thank me for this introduction — the *first*, I believe, we ever pressed upon you, although some persons have, unknown to us, taken the sanction of our name to intrude upon you.

"I write, by the same hand, a few lines to our sisters.

"Your affectionate friend,

"WINIFRED GALES.

"James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

Mr. Holland having finished the "Life of Summerfield," placed the manuscript in Montgomery's hands, not without some solicitude lest the execution of the task

* "I deem it right to say he was a Professor at *Cambridge*, and, of course, an *Unitarian*.—W. G."

should not justify the kindness which had imposed it; but the lapse of a few days ended the uncertainty.

James Montgomery to John Holland.

"Sheffield, March 30. 1829.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"When I named you to the relatives of the late Rev. John Summerfield as a proper person to prepare a memoir of that minister extraordinary of the Gospel, I was perfectly aware of the responsibility which I thereby incurred; but I was also so well satisfied with respect to your qualifications, that I gladly trusted my credit on your performance of the task. I now thank you sincerely for having most promptly and effectually redeemed the pledge which I laid down for you. Without binding myself to subscribe implicitly to every sentiment, or to approve of every form of expression in it, I can say, after an attentive perusal of the manuscript, that, according to my best judgment, you have done justice to the subject, honour to yourself, and service to the Church on earth, by presenting one trophy more of the power of the religion of Jesus — out of weakness to perfect strength, and, by instruments such as God alone *could* make, and such as He alone *would* use, to work miracles of mercy in converting sinners from the error of their ways, saving souls from death, and covering a multitude of sins.

"You know that before I put the multifarious materials for the intended work into your hands, I had diligently examined the whole, both for my own satisfaction, and that I might be prepared to afford you any counsel or assistance in my power, which you might require in the prosecution of your interesting but by no means easy labours. I confess now, that, while my willing persuasion of the ardent piety, the remarkable gifts, and the amazing influence of the preaching of this young apostle upon hearers of all classes, was abundantly confirmed as I proceeded, my sense of the difficulty of establishing a portrait of the

deceased, nearly corresponding with the recollections of the *living,* minister, in the hearts of affectionate kindred and friends, but especially of giving to those who knew him not an idea which should justify, in their esteem, the praises that have been lavished upon him, — my sense of the difficulty of doing this was greatly increased as I went along, and found among his remains few traces of lofty intellect, powerful imagination, or touching pathos, such as would naturally be expected in the productions of a youth so early and enthusiastically followed and applauded. But the bulk of these, being mere journals of daily incidents, often very minute, — and of heart-experience, never coloured either under or above present feeling, the whole intended for his own eye only, and noted down under the eye of his Master, as though the running title of the pages had been, 'Thou, God, seest me,' — the absence of all curious and elaborate composition, is a test of the genuineness of the records themselves, and rather to the credit than disparagement of his genius.

"In his sermons, however, something of the character of elegant literature might be required, and would be in place; because the utter inartificiality which in his *memorabilia* of hourly occurrences was a merit, would have been a defect here. Accordingly, I went with critical scrutiny through nearly two hundred sketches of these, in his own handwriting; and I give it as my deliberate conviction, that though they were very *unlike* what I had anticipated from a fervent, fearless, self-sacrificing preacher, — the delight of wondering, weeping, and admiring audiences, wherever he went, — they were, in one main respect, far *superior,* being calculated less for instant effect than for abiding usefulness. Though but *studies,* they are nevertheless exceedingly methodical in plan; and, in execution, they are distinguished chiefly by sound doctrine, exact judgment, and severe abstinence from ornament: such ornament, however, as does occur, is often exquisite; and, from being occasionally interpolated (as after-thought), I cannot doubt that, in uttering these condensed compositions at spon-

taneous length, illustrations the most lively and beautiful sprang in like manner out of the subject, when the preacher himself was full to overflowing, yet filling the faster the more he overflowed.*

"And this was the right kind of preparation for one who always had *words* at command, but whose feelings commanded *him*. He came to the pulpit with the whole scheme of his discourse clearly and succinctly marked out in his mind. Then, when he was indeed 'in the spirit,'—warmed, exalted, and inspired with the divinity of his theme,—the chain of premeditated ideas, link by link, in seeming extemporaneous succession, would be developed; while every thought, emotion, and appeal would body itself forth in the most vivid and appropriate language. Then, truly, would his bow abide in strength, and every shaft which he sent from the string, like the arrow of Acestes of old, would take fire in its flight, shine through the clouds, and vanish in the immensity of heaven.†

"But as the sabbath and the sanctuary were the day and the place of resurrection,—when his closet skeletons, thus clothed upon, became living, breathing, speaking oracles, —the retrogression into their original forms would be proportionately to the preacher's advantage. *Hearers*, who had been rapt towards the third heaven in the fiery chariot of his delivery, and almost seemed to hear 'things which it was not lawful for man to utter,'—when they afterwards became *readers* at home of the few, faint outlines, however symmetrical and harmonious, would scarcely recognise their shadowy resemblance to the glorious apparitions which had gone by,—never to be renewed except with the presence, the eye, and the voice of the preacher himself. In fact, every attempt to present on paper the splendid effects of impassioned eloquence, is like gathering up dew-drops which appear like jewels and pearls on the grass, but run

* A volume of these skeletons of sermons was published by Mr. Summerfield's relatives in 1842.

† Virg. Æn. lib. v. 525—8.

to water in the hand; the essence and the elements remain, but the grace, the sparkle, and the form are gone.

"Summerfield's memory needs no monument of his handy-work to endear and perpetuate it; nor is it any derogation from his talents, to say that he has left no posthumous proofs of their power, to divide with his Maker the glory of what God was pleased to do by him in the faithful exercise of them. Brief, indeed, was his career, but brilliant and triumphant. Like one of the racers in that game wherein he who ran with the greatest speed, carrying a blazing torch unextinguished to the goal, was crowned victor, — he so ran that he soon obtained the prize; and *his* light — not extinct even in death, but borne again in your hand, my dear friend, along the same path, while you retrace the Lord's dealings with him, through his swift and shining course — shall be a guide, a comfort, and an example to thousands who never witnessed its living coruscations.

"I do now, therefore, not less heartily recommend your little volume — the more precious because it is a little one* — to the Christian public, as worthy of their acceptance, than on the former occasion I conscientiously recommended yourself to the esteemed relatives of the deceased as worthy to be his biographer.

"I am faithfully and affectionately,

"Your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. John Holland."

It will easily be conceived with how deep emotion Mr. Holland received this elegant and generous testimonial of approbation from his revered friend, followed as it was with the writer's permission to print it along with the work to which it referred.

Montgomery having received from Mr. Major a copy of his elegantly illustrated edition of Walton's "Angler,"

* It formed, however, an octavo volume of nearly four hundred pages, in the first New York edition.

sent to Mr. Holland his old copy of this delightful book, with the following note:—

James Montgomery to John Holland.

"Hartshead, April 10. 1829.

"DEAR FRIEND,

"I send Hawkins' edition of Walton's 'Angler,' and I envy you the pleasure to come if you have not already perused the book. What a second reading may be I cannot tell, but to me the first was more entrancing than opium-eating in the earliest stage;—the spirits, the nerves, the affections are so enchantingly touched, while the understanding is so gently exercised, that the idlest fellow in the world, with a little fancy and feeling, may imagine the soul of pleasant old Walton transmigrated into himself. I have just recollected that you introduce into your title-page of 'Summerfield's Memoirs' a notice of my recommendatory letter, but I do *not* recollect whether you have appended either the unmeaning *two*, or the impertinent *three* letters (Mr. or Esq.) to it. This is to request, that my Christian and surname alone may be used in that place; the former at full length, as it would be in the title if I were the author, and as I write it below.

"Your sincere friend,

"JAMES MONTGOMERY."*

Miss Rowntree to James Montgomery.

"York, 3rd of 3rd mo. 1829.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Jonathan Crowther asked me whether James Montgomery was writing the Life of John Summerfield? Of course, I could not answer the question. . . . When I was in Sheffield, I remember thee saying our worthy friends

* Among hundreds of the poet's letters which we have seen, this is the only one to which his name is written in full.

there seldom told thee when any of our good ministers visited that town. Now, there is one among you at present whom I very much wish thee to see and hear; she is the sister of C. S. Dudley. Nature seems to have given her more than a common share of gifts; she possesses a strong mind, beautifully cultivated; — but should I stop here, I should leave the best feature of her character undescribed, — for she hangs all her gifts upon the cross. I do not remember to have heard any sermons superior, and but few equal, to many which she has delivered; and if thou canst endure a woman's preaching, I would say — do go and hear her. As she is staying at Carr Wood, perhaps thou art already acquainted with her; if so, attribute my needless description to a wish to give thee pleasure. . . . I close with a hearty wish and prayer that thy life may long be spared, and thy faith and love grow brighter unto endless day!

"Very sincerely thy friend,
"E. ROWNTREE.

"James Montgomery, Sheffield."

James Montgomery to Miss Rowntree.

"Sheffield, April 11. 1829.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

". . . I was certainly applied to respecting a memoir of Summerfield, but for reasons — satisfactory at least to myself, if not to his relatives — I declined the undertaking; but at the same time I recommended my friend, Mr. John Holland, as a person eminently qualified for such a task, and I was happy enough to form an engagement with them on his behalf, — I voluntarily promising to look over the materials, which were of great bulk, and to lend him any aid which he might desire in the progress of the work, so far as I might be able to serve him. This I punctually performed, and his labours were nearly completed when your letter arrived. Two original portraits of his hero also had been transmitted to him, one from America, and the

other from the friend you name, Mr. Badby. The manuscript is now finished: I have read it, and given it all the sanction which a recommendatory letter signed with my poor name could afford. It will be transmitted forthwith to America for publication, and I expect will be reprinted in England. — In the next place, thank you for mentioning to me the arrival in this neighbourhood of one of your highly-gifted female preachers. I should have liked to have heard her testimony of the Gospel, but I have neither nerves nor face to go into a place of worship so different from those to which I am accustomed, apparently — as it would have been in the eyes of all your shrewd friends here — from mere curiosity. I am afraid, almost at any time, and in any place *at home*, to do so, when strangers are expected, except when a public invitation is given, — and this partly from weakness, and partly for conscience sake, — the former arising from the fear of man, lest my motives should be mistaken by my fellow-creatures; and the latter, I trust, from the fear of God, lest my motives should be abomination in his sight, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and who in his worship especially requires truth in the inward part. I did not meet with her at all during her visit here; but yesterday evening I had the pleasure of drinking tea at Carr Wood, in company with her sister (I presume, but I did not ask, whether the *Mary* Dudley, whom I met there, was the preacher or not). She appeared to be very amiable, pious, and intelligent, as might have been expected of any scion of such a stock. — I pass over your self-humbling remarks on something which I had said, and which I have entirely forgotten, in my last letter. I cannot play at compliments with such a friend as you; even in the affairs of this world I have little humour for ceremony in words; I should as soon think of trying whether I could bow lower than you could curtsey, as saying any more about the matter. — I am very sorry that it is not in my power to afford any such information or advice as you desire respecting Ireland, and your intended visit to that most wronged and pitiable country.

You must have mistaken some of my talk about Ireland, when I was at York, as you say that you recollect *my* visit there. I may have told you that when I was a child I lived a year and a half in the north of Ireland; but, though that was one fourth part of my whole life at the time I left it and was brought to England, my knowledge was necessarily very limited, and, at the distance of half a century, must be more imperfect now than it was then. I have never been in Ireland since. It is true that I have been a subscriber to various societies for bettering the mental and spiritual condition of my *half-countrymen*, — for both my parents were Irish, — but I am as much a stranger to them, except as I read of them in books, hear of them from friends, or see them as emigrants doing their daily drudgery here, as I am to the inhabitants of France or Italy. I am not acquainted with any of our Moravian Brethren in Dublin, though we have a respectable congregation there. . . .

"I am truly, your obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss E. Rowntree, York."

Tuesday, April 14. Montgomery called at the "Iris" office, and took Mr. Holland to dine with him. In the course of conversation, it was suggested to the poet that a volume of "Lay Sermons," from his pen, would not only be acceptable, but useful. He objected that his style was not at all that of a sermon-writer. This his friend admitted, at the same time contending, that it was so much the better adapted for a readable and instructive work, combining religious exposition with Christian counsel and exhortation. He shook his head, saying, however, after a moment's pause, that he had sometimes entertained the idea of composing a collection of family prayers; as he thought he understood what was wanted in this class of compositions, though he possessed, in a very humble and inferior degree,

"the gift of prayer" *vivâ voce.* His friend of course did not contradict him, as he might justly have done, on this point, but said he was glad to find him thus at least acknowledging the value and usefulness of pre-composed prayers in certain cases; as it was quite certain the opposite opinion, which is often flippantly and inconsiderately advanced by good men, whether from the pulpit or otherwise, had deterred hundreds of well-disposed heads of families from engaging in acts of social devotion of any form, from the idle fear of being laughed at if they used a book! He agreed with this, and said he generally used a book himself, occasionally interpolating, of course, such expressions or petitions, or modifying the language as his feelings might prompt, or circumstances might require: indeed, he was persuaded that, with whatever exceptions, the ordinary language of many good men at the domestic altar had more sameness than some persons supposed — at least, he had noticed this in houses where he had sojourned for any considerable length of time. He spoke favourably of the collection of prayers known as "Jenks's Devotions:" Jay's he considered as superior compositions, but too rhetorical; the head, rather than the heart, being engaged: Cotterill's were excellent, as composed principally in expressions taken from the Holy Scriptures and from the established services of the Church of England; but the book was too expensive, at least for a large class of persons upon whom it was very desirable to urge the adoption of such an aid as the alternative of neglect of family devotion altogether. Were he to compile a manual of prayer, he would make Scriptural language, as much as possible, the basis of the whole, not hesitating to borrow, from other sources, any sentiment or expression that appeared remarkably striking and appropriate. It is to be re-

gretted that this pious labour, for which we think he was well qualified, and which would have formed an appropriate counterpart to his "Original Hymns," was never undertaken by him.

Joseph Cottle, who, as well as Montgomery, was growing in heavenly-mindedness, accompanied a present of the fourth edition of his "Poems and Essays" with a note containing the following "P. S. It will always give me pleasure to hear of your health and welfare: I trust we both love our Saviour, and shall be found at last amongst the true worshippers. How is your excellent brother? Please forward the enclosed parcel to Mr. Southey by the first coach."

In the course of this year appeared a handsome edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress," not with verses by diverse poets, but with a memoir of Bunyan by Robert Southey. On seeing an announcement of this work, Montgomery immediately transmitted to the worthy Laureate a copy of his own essay on the same subject, accompanied by a friendly note, of which the following pleasing letter is the acknowledgment: —

Robert Southey to James Montgomery.

"Keswick, April 28. 1829.

"My dear Montgomery,

"I received your parcel just long enough ago to have read the brief note which it contained from my dear and good old friend Joseph Cottle, your letter, and your 'Introductory Essay to the Pilgrim's Progress.' First, let me thank you for your letter, for the books, and for the kind manner in which you remember one who always remembers you with respect and admiration, and with as much affection as can be felt for one of whom, much to his own regret, he personally knows so little. Then let me complain of you for supposing I should not agree with you in your estimate

either of the character or the genius of John Bunyan, a name which I never mention without honour, nor think of without pleasure. I am not conscious of any feeling, thought, word, or deed, at any time of my life, which could have led you to imagine that in this case I was morally and intellectually blind. Indeed, when I was applied to by an old acquaintance, on the part of Mr. Major the bookseller, to perform an office which I did not till this day know that you had performed before me, the motive which induced me to accept the offer was pure liking for the task, out of pure love for the author and the book.

"Had I known of your edition, I should certainly and at once have declined the proposal. But I am glad that I did not know it: ignorance, which in some cases is said to be bliss, has been good fortune here. Yours is a critical essay, mine will be a biographical one; and we shall have nothing in common but the desire to do honour to the author, and to introduce the book into new circles (if that can be), except what I shall borrow from you thankfully.

"On the very day that your letter was written (Friday last), I read through the Dutch book which some booby notices in your essay [he means, which has been noticed by some one as mentioned there] as being the undoubted original of the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' This book came into my hands that morning: it is the property of Mr. Offer, a Baptist, and an ex-bookseller *, who, in his veneration for Bunyan, would not trust me with it till I had satisfied his scruples by letter; assured him of my own full persuasion that the suspicion of plagiarism was utterly groundless, and had represented to him that if there were any accidental resemblance, or, what was just possible, if it should appear that Bunyan might have heard of the book from some Dutch Baptist in England, or some Englishman who had lived in the Low Countries, how much better it were that a plain and short truth (which could not possibly be

* Subsequently editor of a reprint of the First Edition of the Pilgrim's Progress," issued by the Hanserd Knollys Society.

more than this) should be told by a friend than by an enemy.

"It was represented to me that he had found in this book the Slough of Despond, the Hill of Difficulty, and Vanity Fair. The truth I believe to be, that no one who had seen the book could read it. There is not the slightest resemblance or shade of resemblance in it to any one of the adventures of the 'Pilgrim's Progress.' The Fleming's wilful Pilgrimess turns from the high road to follow some people in a byway, and falls into a ditch: the plate which represents this was set down at once for the Slough of Despond. She passes through a village, it happens to be fair day there; she stops a little while in the crowd to look at some jugglers, and all that happens in consequence is, that she is obliged, as is plainly told in Dutch, to take some pains in clearing herself from the lice which she had caught there. Would you desire anything more like Vanity Fair? When they come in sight of Jerusalem, at the close of this day's journey, the Pilgrimess, grown presumptuous, will climb among precipices, is blown over, and falls into a pit from whence there is no deliverer: on these three plates — and the plates alone — has this false and impudent charge of plagiarism been made.

"I will take care that a copy of my intended edition shall be sent to you as soon as it is ready, which the publisher intends it to be in the end of autumn.

"I am almost hopeless when I ask, Will you come and see me, and let me row you on the lake, and guide you upon some of these mountains? You are not in harness now; and I, who shall never be out of it, have always leisure to enjoy the company of a friend. I am going with my family to the Isle of Man for change of air and sea-bathing, which may benefit some of my daughters, and also was a needful removal for myself, when the hot weather comes, to prevent or cut short that troublesome periodical disease which is now known by the name of the *Hay-asthma*, and the habit of which I hope I have weakened, if not broken, by travelling at the time of its recurrence. Our stay will

not be extended beyond the end of June. If you will come to us in July,—and the earlier the better,—you shall have a cordial welcome; and you shall find me the same person in private that you have known me in print. Last year I underwent an operation which has restored me to the free use of my strength in walking, after being crippled many years by a sore infirmity: I thank God it has been effectually removed, and I am once more a sound man, able to accompany you for a whole day's excursion. If you have not seen this country you ought to see it; and if you have, you will know it is worth seeing again. And I should like to show you the books which are the pride of my eye and joy of my heart, the only treasure which I have ever been anxious of heaping together, and to read to you the papers which I have in progress, and to tell you the projects—so many of which death will cut short—of which I have dreamt, or still hope to execute, and to talk with you of many things. Now tell me you will come,—and believe me yours, always with affectionate respect and regard,

"ROBERT SOUTHEY.

"James Montgomery, Esq., Sheffield."

It is impossible to transcribe this characteristic letter, so full of the frank and genial spirit of the writer, without reiterating the expression of our regret that the Sheffield poet never enjoyed at Keswick the opportunity of social personal intercourse with the very individual to whom, of all his highly-gifted contemporaries, he would most heartily have responded, at this period, with ingenuous expression of thought and feeling.

Some years before this period Montgomery called upon Mr. Holland with an individual who was anxious to deliver lectures in Sheffield on Klopstock's "Messiah," a project which neither of the parties could en-

courage, the less so as a material object of the stranger was evidently to promote the sale of a new translation of the German epic, several cantos of which afterwards appeared in print. Montgomery having, at the request of the Rev. James Knight, compared this and two or three other versions with the original, addressed to this friend a series of strictures on the subject, from which we extract a passage or two: —

"I cannot," says the poet, "be quite reconciled to the idea of making the sufferings, death, and resurrection of our Saviour the theme of an heroic poem. St. Paul, when caught up into the third heaven, heard things which it is not lawful for man to utter. In the simple, solemn, and affecting narratives of the Evangelists we read things that can hardly be told in any other manner than as we find them there. They are translatable into any other language which men or angels speak, and with equal effect in all to those who can understand the plain words in their own tongue, which, corresponding with the original records, set forth the circumstances of that most wonderful of all the revealed counsels and purposes of God in its accomplishment — the redemption of the world. Every incident of the details, I acknowledge, may be made the theme of pulpit eloquence or glowing verse, — of sweet discourse, of tender recollection, or exalting gratitude,—till their 'hearts burn within them' who hear or talk of these things by the way, 'and eyes begin to shine;' but to compile a mausoleum of fiction over the few relics (holy and beautiful, and not to be touched by profane hands) which have been preserved for the Church to the end of time, by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, is barely pardonable. I speak with hesitance (though not on that account the less from conviction), because such experiments on sacred subjects have been made by some of the greatest of men not 'inspired of God.' Yet I would rather have seen, with 'Mary Magdalen and that other Mary,' 'the body of Jesus' laid in 'Joseph's own new tomb, hewn out of the rock,' than that gorgeous sepulchre in modern Jeru-

salem built over the supposed place in the garden, with its array of ministering priests, and thronged with pilgrims, adoring the dumb symbols, amidst the blaze of lamps, the fumes of incense, and the sounds of music. As the latter, glorious indeed in its kind, is to the former, so is Klopstock's magnificent epos to the faithful testimony of the Evangelists, brief, and comparatively imperfect as each separate portion is, but, combined, presenting both (Urim and Thummim) light and perfection, before which that which the poet has made glorious 'hath no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.'

"This previous question being disposed of, differently, according to the different views, prepossessions, or taste of readers of all classes, — the 'Messiah' of Klopstock is, undoubtedly, one of the greatest achievements of poetical power. The original is composed in hexameter verse, which in a copious, flexible, and plastic language, like the German, will allow of amplification and exuberance, both of thought and diction, absolutely unattainable, with good effect, in a tongue like ours reluctantly bending to *the yoke of liberty*,— for such to an English reader that metre must be which not only *admits* but *requires* a style diffusive, complicated, and pleonastic. . . . In this anonymous blank-verse translation [Longmans', 1826] there are many noble passages scattered throughout the whole, not unworthy of the original; but I feel quite certain that no version, whether in prose or rhyme, could be made more than tolerable in our language to our taste. The florid prose, in French, of 'Telemachus,' by Fenelon, and the elaborate pomp of Gesner's 'Death of Abel,' in German, may be in one case as exquisite as champagne in Paris, or as palatable as hock on the banks of the Rhine; but both will be as heavy and muddling as factitious port in London. German hexameters are irreducible to British iambics, — the gamboling of the whale in the wide ocean compared with the floundering of the same unwieldy monster stranded in a narrow creek. Not but that British iambics may perform as great feats in verse as German hexameters: I would match them against

those even of Greece and Rome, in their own place; for the very conceptions of poets are, in fact, much more influenced and modified by the genius, idiom, and capabilities of the language in which they write, than authors themselves are aware; for the moment a man *thinks upon a thought* (however the thought may have been suggested) *he thinks in words*, and these constitute the rudiments from which the expression of it for communication to another mind is elaborated. Perhaps no poem of high originality can be perfectly translated into another tongue than that of its author."

This was followed by a second series of strictures, addressed by the poet to his friend, relative to some of the details of the "Messiah," which Mr. Knight, much as he admired the poem in the original German as a creation of genius merely, agreed with his friend in repudiating on theological grounds. In a comparison or rather contrast between the greatest of English and the greatest of German poets, Montgomery awards the palm of superiority to the former, on an important point, as follows: —

"Klopstock, with licenses of language and facilities of composition which Milton neither had nor desired, is ever at the utmost stretch of his imagination to do all that he can on every occasion, instead of his best only; he is neither master of himself nor his subject, and, consequently, not of his readers, while he exhausts all three by his efforts to exalt them. On the other hand, how calm, how still, how self-possessed and yet majestic is Milton! When he has been performing miracles of verse, as in the discomfiture and destruction of the fallen angels by Messiah, he appears so unspent that, like the latter, he seems to 'check his thunder in mid-volley;' and it may be said of him, as he says in the context, 'yet half his strength he put not forth.'"

CHAP. LXVI.

1829.

ARRIVAL OF GEORGE BENNET IN ENGLAND.— LETTER TO HIM.— LETTER TO THE MISSES GALES.— THE ENGLISH LAKES.— DESCRIPTIVE NOTICES. — LETTER TO J. HOLLAND.— ORIGINAL VERSES. — LETTER TO J. EVERETT. — CONVERSATIONS. — HOME HABITS AND INCIDENTS. — METHODIST PREACHERS.— "DOCTOR" SOUTHEY.— OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE HIGH MOORS. — MONTGOMERY WELCOMES G. BENNET AT SHEFFIELD.— LETTER TO MR. BENNET.—VISIT TO REDCAR.—"OLNEY HYMNS."

On the 5th of June Mr. Bennet landed at Deal, and the following morning proceeded to London, from whence he wrote to Montgomery: —

"This *is* 'my dear, my native land!' Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all his benefits! As we proceeded from Deal to Margate, surely never landscape appeared more beautiful to human being than all the country did to me; 'the eye was never satisfied with seeing nor the ear with hearing' the rural sights and rural sounds which convinced my heart that I was at length got home. The grass, the flowers, the trees, in gardens, fields, and hedgerows, all English in colour, and form, and fragrance, especially the golden clusters of the laburnum, and the prodigality of 'milk-white thorn,' reminded me of all that I had loved in youth, and was now again privileged to behold and enjoy after years of absence in strange climes."

This letter overtook Montgomery and Rowland Hodgson at Keswick while they were together on a Bible tour in the north, and both immediately addressed

their common friend on the same sheet. The former says, that while he is writing, "our friend Montgomery is gone on an excursion to the top of Skiddaw, one of the highest mountains of this neighbourhood: when he returns, he will add a few lines to this letter."

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Keswick, June 11. 1829.

"My dear Friend,

"Your last letter, and the most welcome of all that have been received from you, from every quarter of the world, because it *is* the last, and written on British ground, reached me at this place just when I was setting out on an expedition to the top of Skiddaw. I hastily read it, and with a heart overflowing with joy at the good tidings which it brought of your arrival, I proceeded on my way, leaving to our good friend, Mr. R. Hodgson, to occupy the first pages of a letter of congratulation, which we at once determined to send to you, on your long-wished-for and now happily-accomplished return to your native country. But though my limbs, with the occasional help of a pony, bore me to the height of the magnificent mountain above-named, and though my eyes surveyed an immensity of horizon, comprehending land and sea, lakes, rivers, hills, and woods, in the richest diversity, all spread like a map beneath my feet, my mind, but especially my heart, has been engaged with you all the forenoon; and from the stupendous elevation on which I stood, I saw not only the adjacent portions of the British Isles, which every eye may see on any clear day from thence, but I traced you all round the world, and the isles of the South Seas, New Zealand, New Holland, China, the two Indies, Madagascar, South Africa, St. Helena. and all the oceans you have crossed, dividing and connecting the utmost regions of the earth, even to the very spot where you landed at length on our own dear shores, — all these were present to my spirit, and in each of these I could perceive that goodness and mercy had followed you

all the days of your long absence on a circumnavigation of charity, the first that has been made by an individual since man fell, and the promise of a Saviour was given. I will not flatter you; I know it will humble you when I say that you are, in this respect, the most privileged of all that have lived, or do live, having alone done what never was before attempted, and what your late honoured and lamented companion was not allowed to achieve: the glory thus granted to you, you will lay at the Redeemer's feet, and say, it is the Lord's doing that I have been exalted to do this; and to his name be all the praise. On the summit of Skiddaw, under the blue infinity of heaven above, and in the presence of the widest compass of earth I ever saw, except once before, I laid my thank-offering on that altar not made with hands, to Him who has been the refuge of his people through all generations; to Him who, 'before the mountains were brought forth, *was God.*' I laid my thank-offering to Him *there*, for all the deliverances which He has wrought *for* you, for all the mercies he has conferred *upon* you, for all the good which I believe has been done *by* you, during your long labours and many sufferings, and especially for this last evidence of his loving kindness towards you, and towards us, too, in answering our prayers, and bringing you safe to our own land and yours; and my heart's desire and prayer for you was, that you may yet long be spared to tell of his goodness and his wonderful works. Mr. Hodgson has so fully expressed my feelings in expressing his own, that I need add nothing further than '*God bless you!*' Yea, and you shall be blessed.

"I am truly your affectionate friend,

"Changed only as years have changed me,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq.,
Missionary House, Austin Friars, London."

James Montgomery to the Misses Gales.

"Ambleside, June 7. 1829.

"My dear Friends,

"A moment lost is gone for ever: no time to come can overtake the time gone by. Take this grave sentiment as the fruit of my experience last evening, when I lost an opportunity which all the ages of eternity cannot restore. I rambled so far upon a wild range of craggy eminences that overlook this pretty little town, with its white houses in the lap of a green valley, that I could not find my way back to secure the post, though I spent half an hour in seeking what seemed very plain—a short road to the bottom; and, after all, had to turn back to the very point on which I set out, and tread my steps again over the circuitous path by which I had ascended. This letter ought to have been written yesterday, and been delivered in Sheffield to-morrow; but *to-morrow* will have become *yesterday* before it can reach its destination, and the consequence is that its contents must be very different from what they were intended to be: I do not even know whether it would have been addressed to *you;* I rather think that would have gone to my fellow-labourer, John Holland, in the Sunday School Union. It was my wish to send a message of affectionate remembrance to the teachers and friends of that institution, to be delivered to them at their anniversary meeting on Whit Monday, this year, the first that I have missed since 1813; and this comes nearer to the quick with me, because I believe I am the only person who has hitherto always been present, and always actively engaged in the business of that festival. But I must not fill this sheet with vain regrets. Though I may probably be on the top of Helvellyn, the mightiest of all the mighty mountains here, when they are assembled in the afternoon in the new Nether Chapel, I hope to be in spirit among them. And yet I anticipate that the endeared recollections of the *first* anniversary which was held in the *old* Nether Chapel will carry me back to times long past, and to a building as utterly

removed from the face of the earth as that day is from the light of the sun; but the sunshine of that day, and the shadows of that roof under which we then found the house of God and the gate of heaven, can never be forgotten, I do think, in this world or the next, by those who were on that occasion baptized into one spirit and one body; for it has every year been remembered as the Pentecost from which many a one went forth to the work of the Lord with renewed love, and faith, and zeal, and power to do it. Every day of every year since, I believe it may be said that Sheffield has been better, in some respects, for that day of that year.

"On every successive anniversary during the eight years' absence of our friend and founder, George Bennet, I have in one way or another reminded the meeting, that though in person at the ends of the earth, he was certainly among us in spirit, and his prayers and praises were ascending in our behalf to the throne of grace, which is found everywhere by all who would approach it. This year, to-morrow, his spirit and mine may meet *where* and *when* I had almost confidently predicted last time we should meet in our bodily presence, if both our lives were spared. I suppose you have not yet heard of his arrival on his native shore, or by some means or other you would have contrived to have let me know. On my part, you may say, I ought to have let *you* know before now where I have been since I left home, and when I may be expected to return. I have seldom had a fairer apology for not writing earlier than I have now to plead. My friend and I have been either so frequently from stage to stage in hurry and weariness of travelling, and such exercise as we have been called upon to engage in at different places, or we have been so hospitably entertained at private houses, that we have had little or no time at our disposal.

"We attended six Bible meetings between Monday and Friday, and yesterday was the first breathing time that we could really enjoy; yet the enjoyment was perhaps the hardest fatigue we have yet undergone. Some kind ladies, who accompanied us from Kendal, made a party for an ex-

cursion. We breakfasted on the banks of Windermere, travelled over the intervening hills to Grasmere, and thence to Rydal, concluding the round by a visit to Mr. Wordsworth, so that my spirits were sufficiently exhausted on our return hither to justify a ramble alone to recruit them; and then going further than I intended, the opportunity of writing to Sheffield was gone by; and thus, as I have said, a moment lost is lost for ever!

"I have little to say concerning myself since I came away. I might make many complaints of personal infirmities, and mental sufferings, and so forth, which are my daily crosses when I am from home, and make travelling, with all its healthful exercise and exhilarating changes of scene and society, little better than penance and pilgrimage to me; though in retrospect it always furnishes abundant materials for thought, for thankfulness, and for hope also. Mercy and goodness hitherto, as on all former occasions, have followed me every step of the way; and at the close of every stage and every day I have had cause to be humble and happy, though too often I have been neither one nor the other, as I ought to be. I cannot to-day—indeed, it must be put off till I can do it with the living voice—give you any particulars of our adventures: there have been none of a romantic character, nor any descriptive of the scenery which we have noticed,—indeed, we are only just entering into Lake-land; the promise is great, and it will be my own fault if I am disappointed. I may just say that I have seen the greatest lion here,—Wordsworth; and the dens of two others,—the Opium Eater's, and Professor Wilson's (Christopher North). Wordsworth's house and grounds are all that a poet could wish for in reason and reverie; for after having seen them and him, I said they were more beautiful and *appropriate* than he himself could have invented if he had the whole lakes, mountains, and all to have called into an arrangement of his own, in the happiest mood of his own mind. De Quincey's cottage is a little nutshell of a house; but though I could discern nothing attractive about it, I should have been glad to have peeped in, if I could have

been to him what he was to me,—invisible. Professor Wilson's is a handsome small house and pleasure ground, of which I merely caught a glimpse as we rolled through the dust of the road before the slope on which it stands. He is there, and I have been offered an introduction, which I dare not accept. . . .

"I am very truly, your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"To Miss S. Gales, Sheffield."

James Montgomery to the Misses Gales.

"Keswick, June 10. 1829.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS,

"You would wonder why, in my letter from Ambleside, I did not acknowledge the receipt of *two* which you forwarded to me at Kirkby Lonsdale. These met me yesterday evening at this place, having been twice redirected, and probably lain here some time before our arrival. I am sorry, on Miss Franks's account, that hers did not reach me sooner; but as that was nobody's fault, it would be idle to waste words and patience in wishing it to be otherwise. I could not write to her before to-day's post, which I believe will reach her to-morrow; and as she is a woman, and will not easily be diverted from a good purpose, I hope it will place my 'Garden Thoughts' in the hands of half the fair ladies of York, though she did not receive my *imprimatur*. I will tell you the meaning of that word when I get home, if you think it worth your while to ask me: I might have done it in a quarter as many words as I have already used *not* to tell what now *I will not tell* from mere caprice, after making so much ado about nothing. The other letter, from Ockbrook, carried double, in the old-fashioned way—the husband before, the wife behind—Ignatius and Agnes on a pillion (as it ought to be), not quite as large as his saddle. However, though the reception of an epistle from that quarter startled me, being so accustomed to anticipate evil tidings, that good ones, sent express through *six* different

post-offices, were the farthest of anything from my imagination; yet, if I had reflected like a man of sound *feelings*—I dare not hint I am not of sound *mind*—I might have guessed the very import of the despatches. I say, though the appearance of a letter from them fluttered me at first, it did contain what we must consider good tidings at present, namely, that John James [the poet's nephew] had received and accepted (in our congregation dialect) *a call* to go, as an assistant, into the school at Gracehill, in the north of Ireland, where his father was, though one *grade* (Sarah can interpret that American term) higher, some four-and-twenty years ago; and where Agnes was queen bee of such a hive as no successor to her crown and dignity has been able since her abdication to maintain. John James, therefore, will return to his native country, though not to his native place, which lies a few miles distant, and is called, in the language of Irishmen, Ballymaquiggan, but in that of brethren and sisters, *Gracefield*. I only desire for him,—and my desire becomes prayer when I consider of how much importance to himself, both in time and eternity, this change in its issues may be, his whole future course of life turning off almost at a right angle from this point, like a river running east, by the intervention of a mountain diverted southward,—that so far as his father has been a faithful follower of Christ, the son may tread in the steps of the father, and avoid those of—him who is next of kin, and bears the least amiable of all names—uncle.* I am sure he did right in going to Ockbrook, and equally confident that he does right now in leaving it. . . . So far I had written yesterday night, and had intended to have finished and forwarded the same this evening, but the morning brought me Mr. Bennet's and

* The Rev. John James Montgomery has long been an able and highly respected minister among the Moravians; and we may add, that however the poet might choose to designate as "the least amiable of all names" that which indicated the relationship which he bore to his nephew, the latter never spoke to or of his "uncle" without feeling that the term was expressive of reciprocal affection and respect.

Mr. Wilberforce's letters; thanks to your goodness for sending them. Mr. Bennet's Mr. Hodgson and I have answered as promptly as possible; and *that*, after returning from a tour of nearly six hours on the top of Skiddaw, has thrown me too late to close this sheet for the post. If Mr. Ackermann should send a proof-sheet on Wednesday, or earlier, please enclose it to me, care of W. D. Crewdson, Esq., Kendal; if later, please ask Mr. John Holland to revise it, and send it back, stating that I am not at home. . . . I will fill up the remainder of my paper with what will form a chapter of my 'Tour to the Lakes,' when that shall be written,—which may be when I am a few years younger, an event not likely to take place for a hundred years to come. But, first, I must thank you for kindness to Mr. Ramftler [a Moravian minister]. I have thought of entitling the adventure, which will only be a fragment of the day (June 10.), the 'Bowder Stone;' that is, the *boulder stone.* And thus it came to pass:—yesterday we took 'the drive round Derwentwater;' a kind of coasting journey in a crazy car round the lake. When we arrived at George Bridge, the driver asked us if we would go a mile out of our way to see the 'Bowder Stone,' which he thought would be a thing very much *in our* way, as persons strolling about the country in quest of wonderful sights. We agreed to go. Now, the Bowder Stone is an enormous fragment of rock, fallen from the moon, or elsewhere, which lies on the bank of the stream, surrounded by mountains and dells in every direction. The best description I can give you will be in the words of *Mary Caradus*,—there's a name for you!—who would not change it for the best of bad husbands in this world, where they abound! 'Mary Caradus begs leave to inform the ladies and gentlemen who visit the mountains and lakes near Keswick, that she continues at the Bowder Stone House, and attends all parties desirous of seeing that enormous fragment of rock, supposed to be the largest in the world, and which resembles a ship lying upon its keel. The dimensions are as follows:—in the length, 82 feet; perpendicular height, 36 ditto; circum-

ference 82 feet; contains 23,000 solid feet, and weighs 1971 tons, 13 hundred weight.' Thus far Mary Caradus, an ancient dame, who seems herself a chip of the old block, and lives in a house about half as big as this Bowder Stone, which lies so plain by the way-side that a pair of old woman's eyes are hardly necessary in addition to one's own to see it. However, Mary has good reasons for lending hers; she ekes out a living from this stone, which to her (I hope, at least) is bread and cheese, and tobacco withal. To this great stone is attached a ladder with railing sadly out of repair, by which you mount to the top, where there is a seat for two persons, and standing room for at least half a dozen more, who may choose to risk their necks and limbs. Just as we arrived, a chaise and pair set down a lady and gentleman, to whom I readily gave precedence. They and their guide mounted, and I soon followed. This guide was explaining the various points of prospect, mountains, &c., in view, to the twain who occupied the seat. The gentleman was in a light-coloured dress, with a white hat, a brown face, and altogether had an air of sufficient importance about him to make me willing to believe that he could be nothing less in the scale of nobility than an earl. We were so close upon the spot that it was scarcely possible to avoid speaking, unless we wished to appear too proud or too perverse. Glancing hastily round at the magnificent scene, and looking at the bed of the river, which, to use a phrase well understood of another stream thirty miles off, seemed to flow with stones rather than water, I said, 'There is nothing wanting here but water.' 'Y-e-s,' drawled out the gentleman in a tone so low, and *so between* his teeth, that it might have been *by* his teeth, instead of a good sharp bite. I was so chilled that I shrank — at least my tongue did — like a sensitive plant; I said no more, but, turning round, went down the ladder, stumblingly enough, yet grasping rails and steps by turns, so that I arrived safely at the bottom, determining, as I have many times done before, never again to speak the first word to a great man, that my pride might not hazard being mortified by a rebuff from his. The

vexation haunted me all the way back to Grange Bridge, and there it was frightened away by a circumstance which might have been much more lamentable than a pin-prick of vanity in its weakest part. I told you we were in a car; this machine had already broken under us, but had been botched up at a public house by the way-side. I, however, to spare my own bones as well as the horses' walked most of the way afterwards. On the bridge, a long, narrow, stone one, overlaid with loose gravel six inches deep, the horse had not strength to draw us all,—Mr. W. Thomas and myself, besides the driver, who was alone enough for such a journey. In struggling, the horse laid his fore feet on the battlement of the bridge, but, unable to keep his hold, providentially fell within, and we all scrambled out as hastily as we could, without injury. This gave me something else to think about than the proud man's contumely. Next morning I learnt he was gaoler of a certain prison, where I hope never to be confined for debt or worse cause, and that he had been married only two days. I forgave him, *then*, and even formed excuses for him.

"This day (June 11.), immediately after reading Mr. Bennet's and Mr. Wilberforce's letters—both of which I shall duly answer—I set out, with Mr. Hodgson's two servants and a guide, to Skiddaw, though I had some of the weight of Helvellyn yet on my shoulders. The morning was fine, but the prospect below was hazy, and my mind was too much occupied with the South Sea Islands, and all the strange and savage lands and oceans which our friend had visited during his eight years' circumnavigation of the world, to notice, as I otherwise might have done, the immensity of land and sea, in every diversity of form, that lay beneath my feet. On the very summit, after I had breathed my fervent thanksgiving to God for all the goodness and mercy that had accompanied him on all his way, I wrote his name on a slate-stone with a lead pencil, and the date of his landing in England. This I threw upon a pile that supports the flag-staff on the highest peak; and though mortal eye may never see the record, and the first

shower may efface it, I felt something more than romantic pleasure in writing and leaving this memorial there of the best intelligence which we have received from him since he sailed,—his happy return home. Thomas, Joseph, and I then heartily drank his good health and safe convoy to Sheffield in pure brandy, for we could not find a drop of water to dilute it. The vast convexity of the mountain is covered with thin broken pieces of slate, the storms of ages having shattered the original crest of rock. I thought it looked like the field of the battle of Armageddon, strewn with the splinters of swords, and shields, and the wreck of armour, long after the bodies of the slain had been devoured by the fowls of heaven. Farewell, God bless you!

"Your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss Sarah Gales, Sheffield."

James Montgomery to John Holland.

"Kirkby Lonsdale, June 20. 1829.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your kind letter reached me at Penrith on Monday morning. We have had such a week of hurry and journeying from place to place, and I have been occasionally so unwell from anxiety among strangers, and exhaustion from thinking to little purpose, and speaking I hope not always to none, that I have had neither spirit nor leisure to write. Even kindness — and nothing but kindness have we experienced—is oppressive to one so framed as I am; and though I am full of complaints at this moment, yet if I were to utter them they would be all against myself, and would probably awaken very imperfect sympathy in the minds of those most willing to compassionate me, — for I hope they would be scarcely intelligible. I will therefore say no more concerning them. Arrangements have been made for Bible meetings on four successive days next week, from Monday to Thursday inclusive; and if we happily survive so much exertion, excitement, and enjoyment, as they promise, —

judging by what similar opportunities have already produced or required, — we hope to reach Sheffield on Saturday afternoon, June 27., by way of Settle, Skipton, Colne, Bradford, Wakefield, and Barnsley. Please to request Mr. Blackwell to forward the 'Iris,' addressed to me, at the Post Office, Skipton, where any letter from home may also meet me if despatched not later than Tuesday, after which it will be uncertain where I may be caught. — You mention the haunts of poets among the mountains where I have been wandering; and I doubt not, if you had been in my circumstances, you would have much more benefited by the opportunity of indulging honourable curiosity than I have done. I wish, indeed, I had more of your spirit than I have; for I am sure (if I understand you rightly) I should then escape many miseries, and put myself in the way of many felicities, instead of reversing the law of nature, as I often do, to fall from mere fear of them into the former, and shrink, I know not why, from the latter, even when they court me. However, I have not been without many delightful lucid intervals since I left home, and have had the hardihood not only to call upon Wordsworth, with a body-guard of fair ladies, and a poet, the son of a poet, to introduce me; but, on the last day of our stay at Keswick, I ventured to rap at the door of my friend the Laureate, though I knew that he and his family were gone from home; but I heard that Mrs. Coleridge was keeping house for him, and, on the ground of former acquaintance with her husband, I plucked up courage to introduce myself to her, and avail myself of the opportunity of looking at the well-furnished shelves and through the windows of the poet's study. His house and library are such as even you, with all your moderation, might be forgiven for coveting — with the salvo, that he should be no poorer. But I cannot give any particulars here, writing as I do in an inn, and in great haste, not knowing when I may have another leisure hour, as we are going off almost immediately to Casterton, where we are to be entertained a day or two in the hospitable family of W. W. Carus Wilson, father to the Rev. W. Carus Wilson,

a clergyman in this neighbourhood, who has been several times at Sheffield, on Christian anniversary occasions, and of whom I may tell you something more on my return. I think I mentioned, in my last letter to the Misses Gales, that I had ascended both Helvellyn and Skiddaw. From the top of the former I saw, for the first time since I left it, more than forty years ago, my native country. Beyond the Solway Frith the undulating hills of Scotland, in a blue-grey line (the atmosphere being very hazy), were dimly discernible. I had not calculated on this; and the scene took me so by surprise, that, though I was not prepared by any romantic anticipation, the singular motion which stirred my spirit within me, and made the blood in my veins, as it were, run back to the fountain from which they were filled, was even more deeply agitating than I could have imagined. — At Keswick I had the yet more mysterious pleasure of shaking hands with a being thrice as old as Methuselah (I presume), though I cannot tell the age of the invisible within a few hundred years. And it *was* an invisible literally, for the hand that I grasped came out of darkness, and was the *colour* of darkness — 'black, but comely;' it was a *left* hand, and evidently that of a female, very small, and most delicately proportioned, 'With fingers long, and fit to touch the lute.' Yet neither the lady's age, nor the beauty of that specimen of herself which was presented to my eye, tempted me to put a gold ring on the wedding finger. I cannot describe the strange sensation which I experienced when this, the hand of a mummy (and nothing but the hand of a mummy), was put into mine, and examined it as a relic of a fellow-creature, 'of the first order of fine forms, who might have been Pharaoh's daughter herself, or her maid, and this the very hand that first touched the ark of bulrushes, and, lifting up the veil, disclosed the face of the infant Moses to the compassionate friends — 'and behold the babe wept.' There I must leave you to finish the picture and imagine the rest of my reverie, for I must conclude. Pen and ink are both so bad that I can scrawl no more, and my time is gone. — I was on a journey by land and water

across Windermere and the intervening hills to the head of Coniston Water, on Whit Monday. In a lovely, lonely lane near the latter, I walked during the teachers' meeting in the afternoon. My heart overflowed with affectionate remembrance of the occasions on which I had in former years spent so many happy hours, and my prayers were fervently offered for you all. Pray give my kindest regards to my dear friends in the Hartshead. If I do not write to them again they may expect me this day fortnight, as above intimated. Remember me respectfully to Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Roberts.

"I am very truly, your friend,

"Mr. John Holland." "J. MONTGOMERY.

We do not learn exactly when the two friends returned to Sheffield; the latest date of any memento of their tour is that of the following lines, composed

"*For Miss Elizabeth Carus Wilson, of Casterton, on the Anniversary of her Birthday, June* 22. 1829.

"Another year — Of trial here
At length has passed away;
But Mercy crowned — Its weary round
With one more Sabbath day:
Though each had been a day of grace,
It was the last that won the race.

"When suffering life — Shall end its strife
In death's serene repose;
Be Sabbath rest — On Jesu's breast,
Its everlasting close;
Your daily cross may you lay down,
To gain an everlasting crown!"

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Sheffield, July 11. 1829.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Mr. Holland affords me an opportunity, of which I gladly avail myself, to send you a hearty invitation to take

up your quarters in the Hartshead, for as many days and nights as you please, during the approaching Conference: The Misses Gales will be happy to show you, and Mrs. Everett if she accompanies you, any kindness in their power. The arrangements of business during Conference would require such *punctuality*, &c., that, without putting Misses G. to an inconvenience beyond what I can feel to be right, I could not ask any preacher who has to visit Sheffield officially to pitch his tent here; but *your* presence and company will not disturb their domestic affairs, while it will give us all much pleasure.

"I am, truly,
"Your obliged friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. James Everett, Manchester."

August 1. Mr. Everett arrived at Sheffield, and was very cordially received in the Hartshead: what follows is mainly derived from notes made by him at the time. After giving his friend some account of his excursion in Wales, in the autumn of the preceding year, the poet passed to details connected with his recent trip to "Lakeland," which had afforded him much pleasure. He knew Southey was not at home; but his house at Keswick, being left in charge of Mrs. Coleridge, was easily accessible to our poet on mentioning his name; so that although he did not enjoy the satisfaction of seeing the Laureate, as he would fain have done had the arrangements for this tour been under his own control, he could not deny himself the pleasure of communing, for a few minutes, with the *genius loci* in the Laureate's study, and where the MS. of "A Tale of Paraguay" was placed before him by one whom no reader of Byron's unfeeling satire, or to whom the history of her own husband was familiar, could look upon with indifference. He had, as we have seen, the gratification of an interview with Wordsworth, to whom

he had been introduced in London several years previously, and who, as he now learnt for the first time, had once called with Mrs. Wordsworth in the Hartshead, but he was from home, and they did not leave their names. The scenery of Ambleside, he said, was so rich and striking, that a poet like Wordsworth had nothing to do but to go forth, and sketch what was before him — take up what lay in every direction ready to his hand, and reproduce it in terms which, from him, must needs be poetically descriptive. To a stranger, on the other hand, the scenery was so novel, that before it could be read, it ought to be studied like a new language: indeed, the landscape there, as in every locality where the scenery is very striking, has a language of its own. About Keswick there is, said he, "a mob of mountains;" but hastily adding, as if that were a low or derogatory phrase, "a multitude of them." The entrance to Ambleside from Keswick he described as singularly magnificent and impressive, the two noble rocky pikes rising conspicuously in the distance; while all is expectation as to the prospect about to open upon you, and which, so far from disappointing hope, appears every moment, while you advance, rather to exceed it. At Keswick the poet and his colleagues held a Bible meeting, and as some of them were dissenters, it was thus found necessary to proceed with caution, lest they should encounter difficulty in the form of high church prejudice. From the top of Helvellyn he obtained a glimpse of Scotland, first dimly seen in the distance, like a faint cloud, and then becoming rather more distinct; and at the moment the vision brightened on his eye, the thought darted into his mind that, for the first time since he was four years old, he was looking on his native country. "Helvellyn," he said, "must be fine in winter, when covered

with snow, or when its magnificent waterworks, its congregated cascades and cataracts, are tumbling down its sides." He only saw one pretty rill tinkling from stage to stage at the top; "the grander falls, with which Wordsworth must be familiar, were all *from home* at the time of my visit to *his* mountain, as I was at the time of his visit to Sheffield."

After supper, which he always took,— but sparingly, except when he had been speaking, and then he indulged rather more freely in this meal,— he opened the Bible, saying, "Mr. Everett, you must chaplain for us while you stay here, and I will be clerk for you:" he then read the first Psalm with unaffected simplicity and pathos. After prayer, he mixed a tumbler of brandy and water, and placing the glass on the hob, lighted his pipe, smoking, sipping, and conversing till bed-time: this may be said to have been invariably his habit at this time; and, indeed, it was so in after years. In speaking of prayer, he mentioned, as we have heard him do on more than one occasion, an expression uttered by Mrs. Fry on her knees, in allusion to the pecuniary embarrassments of her family,—"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depths closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head," &c.* After a pleasant conversation, relative to what had been done by Southey, Wordsworth, and Scott, since the friends last met, Montgomery said he had been labouring during the past month to finish his poem, the "Chronicle of Angels," of about 300 lines, which he at first intended for Ackermann's "Forget-me-Not," but finding it too long, he had laid it aside. Singularly enough, some time afterwards he received a letter from Alaric Watts, asking him to write a long

* Jonah, ii. 5—7.

poem to accompany a fine engraving, after a picture by an American artist, representing Jacob's vision of the "ladder set up on the earth, and the top of which reached to heaven; the angels of God ascending and descending upon it," for his "Souvenir." He was struck by this undesigned coincidence, and agreed to finish and to send the poem accordingly, especially as Watts promised to give him the beautiful drawing from which the plate was executed.

Aug. 2. Before breakfast in the morning, the poet read the "Daily Words," a verse of scripture and one of a hymn from the Moravian "Text Book;" and then a chapter from the Old and New Testament. He was not what would generally be called a good reader, having but an indifferent voice: he was, however, always interesting, and often impressive; and when the subject was the sufferings of our Saviour, his tones, influenced by his feelings, became peculiarly tender and affecting. He read poetry better than prose. In the forenoon the two friends went to Carver Street Chapel, and heard the Rev. Jabez Bunting preach. "He is," said Montgomery, "a great man: he delivers the most important scriptural truths in such a way as to make them appear plain and familiar; so much so, indeed, that some of his intelligent hearers are occasionally almost tempted to believe they could themselves do what he does with so much apparent ease: yet they are very much mistaken; for that very simplicity of language which involves so much fulness and fitness of thought, shows also how perfectly the preacher has attained that 'art to conceal art,' which is the result of successful study. I heard him constantly when he was stationed at Sheffield several years since, and still remember many of his sermons." In the afternoon they went to

Ebenezer Chapel, and heard the Rev. David M'Nicoll, a fervent and intellectual Wesleyan preacher, with whose discourse Montgomery was much pleased; and to the same place again, in the evening, to hear the Rev. Richard Watson, a truly great and good man, of whom, said Montgomery, "the more you hear him in the pulpit, on the platform, or amidst the social circle, the more you admire him. There is something of what may be called the melancholy of greatness in his face and figure, which seems in accordance with the grandeur and comprehensiveness of his thoughts, which have always reference to the bearing of some great religious object on the world's welfare." To hear together three such preachers in one day, was a treat of which the two friends could never anticipate the repetition. Evening in the Hartshead passed with devotional exercises, the pipe, glass, and conversation, as before. Montgomery spoke of Cottle on this, as on every occasion, with kindness, as having not only written creditable verse, but as having been the early and generous patron of several poets so greatly superior to himself, whose friendship he never lost. He also expressed high admiration of Pascal, whose "Thoughts" appeared like emanations of pure intellect, moulded with mathematical precision; but they should be read in the original language of the author, to which no translation could do justice. Collins, he said, had long had an English edition lying in sheets, awaiting an Introduction by John Foster, the celebrated essayist, who, dissatisfied with two attempts, successively written and discarded, would in the end do justice to his theme.

The drift of Foster, he believed, was to show the compatibility of religion with business,—an important subject; and the essayist would go into the subtleties of it: he might begin at the North Pole, but he would

work his way through every zone of argument and illustration, till he reached the destined goal. Baxter, he said, was an extraordinary man, as his writings evinced: although he amplified so much, the process with him was not merely expansion, but addition: he did not beat an inch of gold into an acre of leaf. In his works he will live for ever.

Aug. 3. Mr. Everett suggested Jeremy Taylor as a good subject for an essay; and instanced his "Holy Living and Dying" as a suitable book for Collins's series. Montgomery concurred, and promised to bear the subject in mind.* On this day, he said, he had for the first time fairly sat down to his Essay for the "Life of Brainerd." He was a man whose spirit appeared too keen for the body; so much so, indeed, that it was to be apprehended a perusal of his journal might discourage some sincere Christians, when they found one who was so holy all rapture in the morning and in the evening suffering from equally great depression. He adverted to Newton and Romaine, as having been very useful as well as remarkable preachers in their day. He had introduced a sketch of the character of Newton, in contrast with that of Cowper, in his preface to the "Olney Hymns." Romaine was not a favourite author with him: he once heard him in the last century; and should never forget the gravity of his aspect, and the solemnity of his manner. Of the Rev. Henry Moore (the biographer of John Wesley), whom they had heard at the Methodist chapel, Montgomery said: "He is a preacher of the old school, with touches that remind you he is an Irishman: there was, among other striking passages in his prayer, one very fine sentiment — 'God

* Neither of them recollected, at the moment, that an edition of the Bishop's Works had just appeared, with a Memoir by the Rev. Reginald Heber.

save the king; let not his greatness perish with him in the dust, but let him be great before thee!' That is of the very essence of the sublime."

Aug. 4.—5. Mr. Everett dined both days with Montgomery, in parties with Methodist preachers who were in Sheffield on account of the Conference. A meeting in aid of the Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews being at hand, some one remarked that the fruit of these efforts appeared small in comparison with the expenditure by which they were maintained; adding, that they seemed to be suffering under the judicial sentence of God. *Montgomery:* "If that be the case, Christians appear to have been wicked enough to execute it; but surely it is not right that the younger brother, after he has been received into his father's house as a prodigal, should turn upon the elder and persecute him."* Talking of an American preacher, it was said the question had arisen the previous day as to whether his name was *Ammet* or *Hamet*. *Montgomery:* "A Sheffielder is not to be trusted with a word in which H is concerned." Mr. Hamet was presently introduced: he mentioned that the President, General Jackson, whose wife had died shortly before he left the United States, was himself half a Methodist, through the influence of her piety; for she not only attended the Methodist ministry, but prayed with and exhorted penitents in the camp meetings, in the performance of which duty the General said he would rather see his wife than a dozen ministers! *Montgomery:* "Half a Methodist! He was more than that, judging from the

* At this time he composed the "Lament of the Jews over their ruined City," commencing—

"Lo! by the Gentiles in their pride
Jerusalem is trodden down," &c.—*Orig. Hymns.*

conduct of his *better half*." Speaking of politicians, he said, "We have some clever theorists, who appear to know little of practice in the management of national affairs; and some clever practical men of business, who seem to be utterly ignorant of theory. We want a few able statesmen to step in between them at this crisis: Wellington, for one, appears to be the man—but years must prove it." Years *did* prove it!

Aug. 6. A party in the Hartshead. Some person present spoke of the Laureate as "Doctor Southey." Mr. Everett said that Southey once reproved him for using the title in addressing him personally: "Call me Mr. Southey," said he. *Montgomery:* "He was in the right: if I were to receive the same title in the same way, I would not use it." "No," said Miss Gales, "it must be Sir James; *that* will be best!" Isaac Walton's "Angler" being mentioned, Mr. Everett asked the poet whether he had ever exercised the craft himself? *Montgomery:* "Yes; once at Eckington, and caught fish too,—to their evident surprise,—and no less to my own, that they should be such fools as to swallow a baited hook of mine."

Aug. 7. To day he accompanied several gentlemen, his fellow managers of the Sheffield Waterworks Company, to the summit of the High Moors, to inspect the site of a new dam. He gave a graphic account of this "moss-trooping expedition," as he called it; describing how they traversed for some miles the "long causeway," which was trodden by the carrier and his packhorse in former times; the clambering over tumbledown walls; the plunging through deep heather; and getting enveloped in a mist so thick that the very heavens appeared to be descending and condensing about them. So far the abstract of Mr. Everett's memoranda of a week.

On the 11th of August Montgomery embraced his long-absent friend Mr. Bennet; and on the following day presided at a crowded meeting of religious persons of various denominations, held in Queen Street Chapel, for the purpose of welcoming the missionary to his native town. As the Wesleyan Methodist Conference was at this time sitting in Sheffield, many of the preachers felt interested in the proceedings, and partook of the gratification experienced by those who saw how entirely the mind and soul of the poet were stirred and poured out on this occasion. Mr. Bennet himself although a gentlemanly, well-informed, pious, and very closely observant individual, was not a fluent speaker; but he had seen, felt, suffered, and enjoyed so much with which his audience was concerned, that every one felt that his presence was a circumstance, if not unique in the history of missions, yet the only one in which a townsman, after speaking for two hours on matters of such deep and solemn, as well as of lively and exciting interest, might have concluded with the words which the Roman poet puts into the mouth of the wandering Æneas:—

—— "quæque ipse miserrima vidi,
Et quorum pars magna fui."

"If you are at York," he writes to Miss Rowntree, August 18th, "you will probably have seen Mr. George Bennet, and heard some of his exceedingly curious and animating accounts of the work of God among the heathen in the Pacific isles. He is in extraordinary good health and spirits, and I hope that he has much good work at home to do, in the cause of God and man, to which he has consecrated what I think he may truly call so many of the *best* years of his life. I told you," he proceeds, "that I had been in Westmoreland, &c., and for the first time I visited the lakes and mountains of that romantic

poetic region. I climbed to the top of the 'mighty Helvellyn,' Skiddaw, &c. I saw Wordsworth; did *not* see Southey; *would not* see another lion of that neighbourhood; and longed and hoped, but in vain, to see a fourth."

While Mr. Bennet was at Sheffield, he not only entered largely on the subject of his recent adventures in conversations with Montgomery, but importuned him in the name of friendship and religion to undertake to prepare for publication such an account of the missionary voyages and travels of himself and the late Rev. D. Tyerman, as their collective written materials and the *vivâ voce* information of the survivor might enable him to produce. Our friend felt that the task involved delicate responsibilities, not merely of a literary but of a higher nature—the interest of that great missionary cause in furtherance of which the deputation had circumnavigated the globe: this and some other considerations led him to pause and hesitate at first. But, on the other hand, he was compelled to admit that he had a comprehensive knowledge of the special object and general bearings of the undertaking, and an entire sympathy with its patrons and agents; besides which there appeared to be no other person to whom, all things considered, the work could be entrusted with the same confidence of success. He therefore, after explaining to Mr. Bennet the terms on which he would undertake the compilation, consented to respond favourably should any negotiation be opened with him officially by the directors of the London Missionary Society. Such overtures were presently made, and received by him while on a Bible tour with his friend Rowland Hodgson: how he responded to them will be seen from the following letter:—

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Redcar, Sept. 12. 1829.

"My dear Friend,

"Mr. Hodgson and I arrived here on Saturday last. You might well begin your letter to *him* with these words, 'Man proposeth, but God disposeth.' *He* 'proposed' to spend the Sunday with me here, and on Monday to proceed with our companion — Mr. Ackworth, of Cambridge — on a Bible tour into Durham and Northumberland, during the present week; but the Lord 'disposed' otherwise. Mr. H. was unwell when we left Darlington on Saturday morning; he grew worse on the journey; and when we arrived here was obliged almost immediately to take to his bed, from which he has never risen since for more than a few moments at a time. His complaint was a violent attack of cholera morbus. . . . We have had a week of most anxious and, at times, of agonised suspense and suffering, by sympathy with him, and fear for ourselves and those to whom he is most deservedly dear, that we might almost suddenly lose him. He had been uncommonly well, cheerful, and vigorous during the first fortnight of our journey, and his exertion in speaking at public meetings seemed rather to refresh than weary him; to renew rather than to exhaust his spiritual and bodily strength. But the Lord was pleased to touch him, and the bodily strength passed away like a breath, but I believe the spiritual has never failed; he has borne all his sore sufferings with meek and humble resignation to the will of his heavenly Father. We were to have gone with Mr. Ackworth into Cleveland next week; but here we must remain till he has sufficiently recruited to return home, which, I trust, will be in the course of the fortnight. I have just now stepped into his room to tell him that I am writing to you. He sends his kindest Christian remembrance; and acknowledges that goodness and mercy have hitherto supported him through the dark valley and the deep waters, which he has been required to pass so unexpectedly; but the land of Beulah, *this time*, we

believe, lies beyond; and we hope it will be long before he is called to walk through *that* shadow of death, and cross *that* river (the Jordan between time and eternity), beyond which the rest that remaineth for the people of God is found in the Canaan above. Miss Phillips and Miss Fanny Preston desire to be remembered kindly to you and by you. May you have much of the presence and power of the Lord with you in your missionary engagements! I almost tremble at the prospect of labours appointed for me next week; but I will not be quite dismayed with the overwhelming consciousness of my own infirmity, knowing where I may be supplied with everlasting strength; and my prayer is, that I may have faith to pray for it, and faithfulness to employ it, so far as a measure may be entrusted to me, for the glory of God, the promotion of his kingdom upon earth, and the furtherance of my own soul's salvation.

"I must now say a few words in reference to the subject of Mr. Arundel's note respecting the 'Missionary Journal.' Having already frankly explained to you the grounds on which I must claim a remuneration if I undertake the work, I cannot more equitably estimate what I think it ought to be, than by showing what I have received for much easier and more pleasant employment as a compiler. You have seen the 'Christian Psalmist' and the 'Christian Poet;' for *each* of these I was paid one hundred pounds; neither of them cost me anything more than what was to myself exceedingly delightful occupation of leisure hours, in reading and selecting from many miscellaneous volumes such materials as suited my purpose. The preface to each of these, of course, took more thought and pains, neither of which I spared. Now, I can form little idea of the amount of manual labour in transcribing, and mental exercise in reducing and modifying such portions of Mr. Tyerman's immense and multifarious journal as may be requisite to form the bulk of the intended volume; nor is it possible, till I have made some progress, and fairly felt my way into the work, and discovered the best mode of managing it, to guess what length of time the whole will occupy. Six months of daily

application, laying all other literary pursuits aside, will be the least imaginable term in which it can be executed. My purpose is to write a connecting narrative, and introduce, as far as may be expedient, extracts from the journals; but all these, I apprehend, must be rewritten by myself; for you are aware that Mr. Tyerman himself would have greatly abridged, and no doubt greatly improved, his first memoranda. I like it the better for being quite in the rough and in mass; and I shall not grudge any exercise either of my head or my hand in preparing them for the press. Now in this hasty and imperfect view of what awaits me, if I venture on the task, I am not willing to begin unless the directors can afford to allow me from 150*l.* to 200*l.*: I say *from*, because, if they say only 150*l.*, I must ask for something more to cover incidental expenses for books, &c., — things which I cannot calculate, but which are sure to come upon me in the course of a long work, and probably a troublesome correspondence in connection with it; — 175*l.*, therefore, is the least sum that I could, in justice to myself, accept as a compensation for my labours and sacrifices, whatever they may be. I could make twice that sum were I to devote equal time and trouble to composition of another kind, and of which I have as much offered me as I *could* do, and much more than I *would* do in the space which I allot by anticipation for the 'Missionary Journal.' Here, then, is the only reason why I can *afford* to undertake it for less than I should otherwise receive for perhaps easier work, — namely, that the pecuniary remuneration for literary exertions (though I am willing, if you please, to presume that it is beyond their worth) is not sufficient to tempt me to devote myself entirely to them. Therefore, though I *might*, if I pleased, turn six months to much more profitable account, in a mercenary way, yet I know my own indolent and procrastinating disposition too well to suppose that I really *would* do even so much as to secure a clear sum of 150*l.* in that time. Now if I begin the proposed work for the Missionary Society, I shall go on daily and regularly with it; and, having a distinct end and great object con-

tinually *before* me, a sufficient necessity will be laid upon me *to make* me diligent, and keep me so, at any expense of lazy inclinations and procrastinating habits. But I say positively that I will not engage upon this enterprise at all, unless the directors are quite satisfied that my terms are reasonable, and that they will be justified in acceding to them. I would honestly much rather be excused, because I am aware of the responsibility that will devolve upon me, and of the almost impossibility of giving satisfaction in such a case. I cannot see why Mr. Orme, or one of their own literary associates, should not be employed upon the spot. Mr. Orme would certainly have much the advantage of me, in managing such materials as Mr. T.'s journal; and he might have assistance which I cannot. I will say no more at present, except that, if I am entrusted with it, I must have the confidence of the directors, and the whole must be left to myself to do the best I can, with such aid as you, in the course of correspondence, may afford me, and under such general directions as, in the first instance, the Board may please to give me. As for the size of the work, I cannot say much: a volume in 4to, at two guineas, or two and a half at the utmost, would be quite large enough; or two volumes in 8vo. The sketches and drawings ought *immediately* to be submitted to an artist to determine which would be most worthy of being introduced as illustrations. Pray give my kindest regards to my old and esteemed friend Mr. Thorpe, and his family.

"I am truly,
"Your affectionate friend,
"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq.
To the care of Rev. W. Thorpe, Bristol."

Physically sensitive as he always was to every atmospheric change, it was pleasant for his friends to hear him say that, during his sojourn at Redcar,

"The weather has exhibited almost every delightful diversity, and some also of its drearier aspects; but every

change has its peculiar character, and to him who sees the perpetual display of divine power and glory in the course of Nature, — Nature at *full length*, as seen here, in land and ocean, — in every change there is something to awe, to please, or to elevate the mind; — and oh! to him whose spiritual eye is also opened, nothing can be uninteresting, when in all the *long-suffering*, the *tender mercy*, and the *loving-kindness* (how comprehensive are those three Scripture phrases, and how beautiful beyond the language of poetry or science!) of our God and Saviour are discernible. May we understand by blessed experience the meaning of those words!"

Thus he addressed his friends the Rowntrees at York, with whom he spent a quiet day on his journey homeward.

Oct. 3. Montgomery returned to Sheffield, after having addressed large and gratified audiences on behalf of the Bible Society at Redcar, Scarborough, Whitby, and several other places. He immediately called upon Mr. Holland to induce him to undertake an essay upon a specific subject, for a religious periodical, which he had himself been requested to write; mentioning, at the same time, that he had received from London an immense mass of missionary documents, and had his winter's work before him. On the afternoon of Sunday, November 9th, he addressed a numerous meeting at Red Hill Sunday School, comprising the bulk of the parents of the thousand children connected with that institution. He dwelt principally on the evils of sabbath-breaking; illustrating his subject by the history of "Frank Fearn," who was hung in chains on Loxley Edge, near Sheffield, for an atrocious murder committed in that neighbourhood, and the proximate cause of which the culprit acknowledged had been a garden robbery on the Sunday.

He then mentioned a remarkable dream, a record of which he had read the day before in the papers of Mr. Tyerman.* This gentleman was not only a vigilant, intelligent, and laborious note-taker during the mission in which he closed his life, but his experience as a draughtsman resulted in a curious collection of sketches of scenery, profiles of natives, missionaries, &c., in the South Sea Islands, which the writer of this paragraph had the gratification of examining with Montgomery and Mr. Bennet at the close of this year.

After delaying for some time to answer a long letter of his Quaker correspondent Miss Rowntree, he at length thus addresses her:—

"My dear Friend,

"If you will just put on your bonnet and cloak, and step into the Glasgow mail, after travelling, I know not how many hours, day and night, you may, perhaps, reach that great city; then inquire for a certain street, the name of which I cannot give you, but, when you have found it, look at the shop-boards for 'William Collins, Bookseller, Printer,' &c. Enter boldly, as if you were going to stock a library from his shelves,—when peradventure the good man himself, half as thin as I am, but twice as brisk, bowing behind the compter, will say,—as well as ten pinches of snuff within the last five minutes will let him,—'Madam, what is your pleasure?' Then, without making a curtsey (because I know you won't, even to oblige me), you may say, 'How comes it, William, that thou hast not sent to James Montgomery, of Sheffield, the package of books which thou promised him six weeks ago?' *His* answer, whatever it be, will contain the secret of my long silence towards you."

The expected package contained copies of Collins's edition of the "Olney Hymns."

* Journal of Voyages and Travels, vol. i. p. 27.

CHAP. LXVII.

1830.

MONTGOMERY IN LONDON.—ALBUM VERSES.—"THEEING" AND "THOUING."—LETTER TO GEORGE BENNET.—LITERARY OCCUPATIONS.—PROPOSAL OF SUNDAY SCHOOL JUBILEE.—INTRODUCTION TO "LIFE OF BRAINERD."—LARDNER'S "CYCLOPÆDIA."—ELECTIVE FRANCHISE.—LETTER TO MR. BENNET.—CONDER'S "MODERN TRAVELLER."—LETTER TO REV. T. LESSEY.—CENTENARY CELEBRATION AT GRACE HILL.—LETTER TO MR. BENNET.—THE "MISSIONARY JOURNAL."—MONTGOMERY DELIVERS LECTURES AT THE ROYAL INSTITUTION.—JOSEPH COWLEY.—LETTERS TO MR. BENNET.—VERSES ON "A LITTLE CHILD."—MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTION.—TESTIMONIAL OF RESPECT TO LORD MILTON.—LORD MORPETH AND MONTGOMERY AT THE CUTLERS' FEAST.—DR. MILNOR OF NEW YORK.—ANTI-SLAVERY MEETING.—LETTER TO MISS ROWNTREE.—MRS. MONTAGUE.

THE commencement of this year found Montgomery actively, and we may add, delightfully engaged upon the Missionary narrative which he had undertaken to compile from a vast but disorderly mass of valuable materials. To enable himself to arrange several matters of detail in relation to the work in hand, and especially to confer with the surviving member of the Deputation, he spent the Christmas season with Mr. Bennet, who was then residing with his nephew, Mr. M'Coy, at Hackney. Of this visit we find the following memorials in rhyme:—

"*For Mrs. Edward M'Coy.*

"Thus hath the man of wisdom spoken:
'A threefold cord is not soon broken.'—*Prov.*

"Three lines of life entwined in one
The poet's eye can see,
From Time's swift wheel, by moments spun,
To reach infinity.

"The first *your own*, my gentle friend,
Then *his*, whom you call 'lord;'*
The third, your *babe's;* these softly blend,
And form a threefold cord.

"Long may they thus together hold
In sweet communion here,
Ere each in turn, infirm and old,
From earth shall disappear.

"But must they then be sundered? No,
Like mingling rays of light,
Where heaven's eternal splendours glow,
These fragments shall unite.

"To form a threefold cord above,
By Mercy interwound,
And to the throne of sovereign love
Indissolubly bound.

"My wish, prayer, hope, these words betoken,
That threefold cord be '*never*' broken.

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Hackney, Jan. 13. 1830."

One of the pages of the album in which the foregoing lines were written, contained a beautiful drawing of a butterfly, resting on a blossom of some kind, underneath which the poet wrote:—

"*Emblems.*

"The butterfly, the flower,
Are beauties of an hour;
And yet they both may be
Emblems of immortality:
Each from corruption lifts its head,
A resurrection from the dead.

* "Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him 'lord.'"

"*That* from its long, cold torpor springs,
A glorious insect, clad with wings,
The liveliest of all living things.
"*This* dies, is buried,—but the root
Shall like a new creation shoot,
Flourish with blossoms, bend with fruit.

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Hackney, Jan. 14. 1830."

During this visit to the metropolis the poet kept himself as private as possible, devoting the time mostly to the business which had carried him so far from home in the season of midwinter. He was, however, caught sight of by and spent an evening with his old friend Robert Young, the Quaker, formerly of Taunton; who, stimulated by a significant remark from his guest, followed an affectionate personal "Farewell!" with an ingenious epistle in defence of the familiar use of the "singular pronoun" when addressing an individual. Although not persuaded to adopt the system of "Theeing and Thouing"—indeed, the *practice* of his correspondent himself was opposed to his *theory* in the very letter in question—Montgomery exhibited an emphatic and pleasing illustration of the "common and ungrammatical misuse" of the pronoun, in the concluding couplet of the following lines inscribed by him in Miss Young's album:—

"*To Mary.*

"Mary!—it is a lovely name,
Thrice hallowed in the rolls of Fame,
Not for the blazonry of birth,
Nor honours springing from the earth,
But what Evangelists have told
Of three who bore that name of old:—
Mary, the mother of our Lord;
Mary, who sat to hear his word;

And Mary Magdalen, to whom
He came, while weeping o'er his tomb:
These to that humble name supply
A glory which shall never die.
Mary! my prayer for you shall be,—
May you resemble all the three!*

"J. M."

The following passage occurs in one of his letters to another Quaker lady:—

"Since I sent you my 'Moravian Text Book,' I have daily used Mrs. Fry's beautiful counterpart, though *even now* I find it difficult to make out the days of the week, and the months, according to your uncouth style of calculation, which, with all deference, I do think exceedingly———and *unpoetical.* I could not find a word which would not have been rather too hard to fill up the blank in the foregoing sentence. I am no man of figures, except those which are the very reverse of mathematical ones,—figures of speech, that involve images and associations lively and lovely, and not dry as dead bones and as impalpable in themselves as the abstract ideas of the three-legged stools, &c. of the old metaphysicians!"

His fair *Friend* replied:—

"I was amused by thy saucy remarks on the simple calculation of days and months in thy little text book, and shall be glad to endeavour to enlighten thee on the subject when we meet, in return for some lessons I shall have to take in order rightly to understand the one thou kindly sent me, and which has been my companion at home and abroad ever since I received it."

---

* Ebenezer Elliott has a sonnet on the "Three Marys," painted by A. Caracci, a well-known picture in the collection at Castle Howard.

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, Jan. 28. 1830.

"My dear Friend,

"At length I have an opportunity of sending a line to you, to say on paper what my heart has said a hundred times in your presence, if you could have heard it speak, when we were together of late, side by side in coaches, arm in arm on open roads, or threading the everlasting mazes of those live labyrinths, the streets of London, or—for I must go a little further—when we have sat together in the house of God, or face to face at the hospitable fireside in Tryon's Place [Hackney] and elsewhere. Turn back to the first four lines of the antecedent connection—how much I felt myself indebted to your delicate, yet assiduous and persevering kindness to me, on our London and country visits during the severe weather of Christmas and the new year: 1829 and 1830 were absolutely frozen together at the meeting points, but our hearts were *not* frozen,—they often burned within us by the way, when we talked of those things that were most dear and precious to us both. I am glad to learn from Mr. M'Coy that you continue to bear the sharp winter cold with comparative comfort, notwithstanding your long residence in tropical climates. Your *mind* must rule your body; and, as it has a firmness for endurance beyond that of any man I ever knew, it surely communicates to the body a temperature which, if it does not neutralise, qualifies the extremes of icy rigour and torrid fervour to itself. May you long enjoy the blessing of a sound mind in a sound body, but especially of a heart right in the sight of God, which shall render all his dispensations, afflictive or joyous, *right in your sight.* This is the Christian's secret of happiness; may you ever be in possession of it in this world of trials, where faith is perpetually put to proof, and often staggers, not at the promises only, but at the wisdom and goodness of God, from our frailty and ignorance in judging of his works and ways!

"But I hope you do not spend all your time in the open

air, breathing and bustling through vapours, and clouds, and storms, or plunging through snow-drifts; some of it, nay, a great deal of it, I trust, is employed in reading those delightful manuscripts which I left with you, and in writing others yet more delightful for my use, and the future benefit of the public. I want, especially at this time, at least as soon as you can furnish them, accounts respecting your first plunge into the Pacific, when your friend, Mr. Tyerman, overturned the canoe, in mounting from the edge on board of the ship at anchor*, the ordination of Ouna and his companion for the mission to the Marquesas, and the king Horitia's 'little speech,' &c. and your misadventure, again, when attempting to land on one of the Sandwich Islands. Your personal feelings and situation no one but yourself can describe in the first and latter of these cases. Do not wait for more materials, but let me have *these* at your earliest convenience: be as brief or as wordy as you please. The other subjects, of which I left memoranda with Mr. M'Coy, you will attend to in succession; and the earlier the better for yourself, for me, and for the work with which I am proceeding as well as I can; but, from illness since my return home, I have yet made but little way, having been becalmed in bed for the greater part of last week. A fresh gale, however, has sprung up, and in a day or two I expect to be sailing with full canvas. Send me your help by furnishing me with matter both of your own and Mr. Tyerman's. At present I have enough to go on with of the latter; but when you have gone through ten volumes, please to forward them by coach to me.

"I am, truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Tryon's Place, Hackney."

Not only did the poet's letters to Mr. Bennet at this period contain, as might be expected, frequent refer-

* The particulars of this accident, and the other matters alluded to above, will be found in the published work.

ences to the work upon which he was so assiduously employed, but it was often mentioned as an apology for the brevity or neglect of his correspondence with other friends. In allusion to a remark by one of these, relative to the apparent devotion of his whole mind to his task, he says,—

"You need not fear that I shall work myself to death on the 'Journal,' or any other literary task. My cause of complaint is not that so much of my time is spent in labour, but that so much of it is spent in dissipation, that is, so much of it wasted in daily engagements, or interruptions, which I do not choose, and cannot avoid, exposed as I am, like a weathercock on the spire of a cathedral, to every wind that blows, from whatever quarter, to be turned about and held in this or that direction, while the instinct of my mind all the while works within against the impulse from without, and the moment I am at liberty spins me back to my own natural bias, as the needle to the pole, after being deranged, and perhaps wheeled round all points of the compass by a foreign influence approximating the box, in which, if let alone, it would always be true to its duty. This is what rhetoricians call a 'mixed metaphor;' but I cannot stay to disentangle the weathercock and the magnet which I have thus unintentionally implicated. You may make the best you can of the puzzle; I think, at least, you will puzzle out the meaning."

James Montgomery to Miss Hannah Young.

"Sheffield, Jan 29. 1830.

"My dear Friend,

"I am exceedingly obliged by your kind letter. . . . It is one of the sweetest and highest, too, of the precious rewards that have been bestowed upon me as a poet, and especially as a Christian poet, that some kindred minds have deemed me worthy of their esteem on account of what I have done—very imperfectly indeed, but with hearty good will—

in the consecration of my talents, such as they are, to *the best service* on many occasions; and it is one encouraging evidence that God has graciously accepted them (so far as they have been sincerely employed in showing forth his praises), that those who *love* God have found pleasure in my poor performances. You, and other members of your benevolent family, have long been the witnesses of my career, and have never feared, amidst good report and evil report on the part of the gay and the fashionable world, to honour me with your approval. It is very gratifying to me, therefore, after a considerable interval since we met or corresponded, to find that your hearts are unchanged towards me in their affectionate regard; and your minds unbiassed by critical prejudices, unawed by self-constituted authorities, still hesitate not to acknowledge me as both a poet and a friend. When you have occasion to write to your brother John, please to present to him my best remembrance, with thanks for his intimation respecting Bible Society meetings in his part of the kingdom [Taunton]. I cannot, however, see any probability of visiting in that quarter, on such an errand, in the course of the present year. . . . I must now say a word or two on the verses which you have submitted to my perusal: they are such as you need not fear to submit to the perusal of any candid reader, and therefore may be contributed to the cause of the Anti-slavery Society. . . .

"I am, very truly, your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss Hannah Young, London."

Amidst all his engagements Montgomery was never forgetful of the interests of Sunday Schools; and a letter which he wrote to a friend in London, and an extract from which appeared in the January number of the "Teachers' Magazine," was productive of a very important movement in the course of the following year. After alluding to the year 1781 as that at the latter end of which, according to Lloyd's Memoir of

Raikes, that benevolent man was first influenced to "*try*" the experiment of Sunday Schools, in his native city of Gloucester, the writer proceeds:—

"Now it has occurred to me, that a *Sunday School Jubilee*, in the year 1831 (50 years from their origin), might be the means of extraordinary and happy excitement to the public mind in favour of these institutions, of which there was never more need than at this time, when *daily* instruction is within the reach of almost every family; for the more universal the education of the children of the poor becomes, the greater necessity there is that they should have religious knowledge diligently imparted to them, which can be done, perhaps, on no day so well as the Lord's. I merely throw out the hint of a Jubilee, and if you approve, I should like it to be given to all that are interested in such a subject, through the medium of the 'Magazine,' in the first number of the new series, that it may be duly considered in the course of the ensuing year, and a proper plan digested for carrying it into effect. I feel confident that it would be a means of great blessing."

In the beginning of this year, Collins of Glasgow published the "Life of the Rev. David Brainerd," as "Revised and Abridged, with an Introductory Essay," by Montgomery. This deeply interesting record of the labours of an early "Missionary to the American Indians," in its original form, was prepared by the celebrated Jonathan Edwards, from the private journals of Brainerd himself, which were "never intended to be perused by a fellow creature, and are often too delicate, too faithful, too perilously pure, to be looked upon by an eye unopened by the Spirit of Truth, as disclosing the inmost secrets of a most retiring heart, panting after communion with God alone, yet perpetually at strife with itself; suffering exquisitely from the diseased sensibilities of a morbid bodily constitution, and troubled

with the rank springing up of those roots of bitterness over which the Christian must often mourn and lament." Two subjects especially exercised the good man's mind, and became fruitful sources of mental suffering, viz. "The manner of acceptance with God; and the evidence of Divine life within himself." With such delicate and perilous but all important elements of human character, in relation to the various phases of a state of profound spiritual experience, Montgomery had to deal. What other member of "Britain's living choir" *could* and *would* have *so* dealt with them? Into the discussion of the question as between the learned and pious President Edwards and the essayist, relative to the reality, the importance, and the evidence of "religious experiences," we may not enter here: suffice it to say, that the latter authority is explicitly in favour of those personal "*experiences* of the love of God shed abroad in the hearts of believers, by the Holy Ghost given unto them, when the Spirit witnessed with their spirit that they were born of God, which thousands and tens of thousands of Christians, in all ages, have openly professed to enjoy." And, in allusion to a striking passage of Brainerd's in his last illness,—"I was born on a Sabbath-day, and have reason to think that I was *new-born* on a Sabbath-day, and hope I shall die on a Sabbath-day"—the essayist says, —"Some change, then, must have passed upon him on a certain Sabbath-day, analogous to that which thousands, as little liable to be deceived as he, have called, with respect to themselves, the new birth, accompanied with a consciousness that they were, at that time, 'born again of the Spirit.'" In this essay Montgomery illustrates at some length the fallacy of the old dogma of worldly wisdom,—"First *civilise*, then *Christianise*" —a sentiment which he was ever ready and zealous

to confront with the evidence of missionary success. And while he thus highly appreciated the object and the result of Christian Missions, it is no wonder he should always have held in equal esteem the persons and labours of their faithful agents. Speaking of Brainerd in solitude and suffering, "Was there," he asks, "at such times, on the face of the inhabited earth, an object lovelier in the sight of heaven, than that lonely man, in the depths of immense forests, reading the words of eternal life for himself, or pouring out his soul, amidst the silence of the desert, in prayer for the salvation of the heathen? Yes, there was an object yet lovelier: the same man, after he had been thus hidden in the secret pavilion of the Most High, coming forth from under the wings of the Almighty, to teach wondering savages, among whom God was unknown, and Christ was not named, the lessons which he learnt in retirement. Brainerd, thus occupied, presented a spectacle to the eyes of angels which they might behold with delight, and even long to be partakers with him in the honour and felicity of ministering to these heirs of salvation."

Dr. Lardner having projected and commenced the "Cabinet Cyclopædia," to consist of a series of about one hundred neat and handy volumes, solicited the co-operation of Montgomery in the biographical department of the work, which was to comprise contributions from the pens of some of the most popular authors of the day,—including Sir Walter Scott, the first portion of whose "History of Scotland" had just appeared. Into this scheme the poet not only himself entered, so far as to compile the brief memoirs of Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso, which afterwards appeared in the series of "Literary and Scientific Men of Italy;" but he also, in answer to inquiries on the part of the editor, recom-

mended Mr. Holland, who undertook and completed the three volumes on "Manufactures in Metal."

On the 18th of February a public meeting of the inhabitants of Sheffield was held at the Town Hall, in pursuance of a numerously signed requisition to the Master Cutler, to consider the propriety of petitioning Parliament to extend the elective franchise to that town. As Montgomery's name was not affixed to the requisition, we were somewhat surprised to see him at the meeting, — and still more so when we saw him rise to speak. He merely, however, suggested the modification of a phrase in the petition (which was at once agreed to), adding, that he had not come thither with the intention of taking any part in the proceedings, but for the purpose of being a spectator of the good sense and good conduct of his townspeople.

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, March 13. 1830.

"My dear Friend,

"I am so unwell this evening that I can only write a few lines to thank you, which I do sincerely, for your late kind letter, and the accompanying manuscripts. The latter are peculiarly precious to me, and I shall be very glad, at your convenience, to receive further communications of the kind, to enrich the volumes of your Missionary Expedition. I have been labouring at this work whenever health and strength, and leisure from some other unhappy engagements (not literary ones), which involve me in many perplexities and cares of this life, would allow me. I certainly do not make haste, but yet I go on; and if not with good speed, at least with good will, and unfailing resolution to do my best according to circumstances. The labour, however, is far more *minute* than I expected. I thought that little more than careful abridgment would be requisite; but, in

truth (materials excepted), it costs me as much as original composition. I do not, however, repent the undertaking, and I will not shrink from any expense of time and thought to do justice, if possible, to the subject, and credit to the cause. When you come down at Easter, you will, of course, bring with you all the volumes of Mr. Tyerman's Journal you may have, at that time, looked over. . . . I am infirm and spiritless, except when I am vexed into something like strong feeling by local and party feuds, out of which I cannot disentangle myself, and in which I deliberately involved myself at first, *as a victim, I may say*, that by a well-foreseen sacrifice of personal comfort, and what is more dear to me than pecuniary interest,—peace of mind,—I might mitigate the strife of tongues, and the civil war of passions and prejudices, in this town, on the subject of Water Companies. . . . And now accept my best acknowledgments of all your goodness to me, not only while I was with you at Hackney, &c., but ever since you were my friend, and I truly and affectionately yours,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq.,
care of Mr. Edw. M'Coy."

The excitement and dissension which had a few months previously been raised in Sheffield in connection with a project for a new local Water Company, in rivalry of one in which Montgomery was a shareholder, and which was only allayed on the parties obtaining an Act of Parliament, harassed him a good deal, as intimated in the preceding letter: the more so, indeed, that he appeared in hostility to a class of persons with whom he had generally been in favour, but whose *ad captandum* appeals rendered those opposed to them very unpopular.

Actuated by motives of friendship, Montgomery briefly resumed the pen of the reviewer in the compo-

sition of an article for the "Iris" in praise of the "Modern Traveller," a popular and instructive compilation, the bulk of which had appeared anonymously.

"The indefatigable 'Modern Traveller' has at length completed his journeys in the remotest regions of the world, and having come home, sat down, and taken off his mask of invisibility, we are well pleased to recognise in him our well-known literary acquaintance, Mr. Josiah Conder, — a poet of no mean rank, a critic of formidable authority, and a polemic of rare skill, and — which is much more rare — of exemplary moderation in wielding the most perilous weapons that can be taken into human hands. In his fourth character, he has . . . instructed and delighted his readers with the most comprehensive, yet succinct and admirably entertaining descriptions of many of the principal portions of the globe that can be found in any publication extant; being, in fact, the sum of all that is most curious, valuable, and authentic in numberless unwieldy productions of other travellers, geographers, and historians."*

Conder, in acknowledging this volunteer effusion of his friend, gratefully recals the period when they first met. "I was then," says he, "only eighteen; and you will perhaps recollect my little study four stories towards the sky, in Bucklersbury, where you were so kind to the young poet as to spend an hour in listening to his rhymes, and giving alternate praise and lessons of criticism, which I never forgot."

The following letter was written in reply to one inviting the poet again to visit Manchester, and take part in a Wesleyan Missionary Meeting in that town: —

* Sheffield "Iris," March 16. 1830.

James Montgomery to the Rev. Theophilus Lessey.

"Sheffield, March 16. 1830.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I thank your Missionary Committee very sincerely for their kind invitation to attend their anniversary this year. I have not been able to accept one invitation of this kind, though I have had many, not because my *heart* is changed, but *I* am not even the man that I was: the bruised reed grows weaker and weaker with handling, and the smoking flax dimmer and dimmer with blowing upon while the ashes scatter in the wind. For the last two months, if I have not been absolutely ill, I have been very much indisposed. On my return from London, a constitutional complaint, from which I am seldom quite free, though for years past I have been very little inconvenienced by it, seized me with unwonted virulence, and clings to me with inveterate tenacity. I have been lame, and frequently confined to my bed—more for the sake of rest, at full length, than from absolute inability either to rise or walk; and having taken much medicine, I feel myself very weak and spiritless: mind and body seem to fail at times*, and when I rally it is only under extraordinary excitement, of which I have sometimes too much, in consequence of local and party feuds, from which I cannot free myself, though I went into wilful bondage to serve my townspeople, at the sacrifice of time, wealth, and peace of mind,—all which I foresaw, and counted the cost. I cannot say that it has been too great for the object, but it has been too great for me. But had I unfailing nerves and a mind never weary, I should have occasion for both in the execution of a task

* "I sometimes" (says he, on a loose memorandum without date) "seem to myself quite worn out, or so fast wearing as if atom by atom I were falling into dust: thought, feeling, fancy, memory, invention, fear, hope, affection—all exhausted; and yet there are working materials and working power in me which eternity cannot exhaust."

which I have undertaken, and in which I have made some progress, though less than was desirable in consequence of my late and present infirmity,—I have undertaken to prepare for the press the journals of the missionary voyage round the world of the late Rev. Dan. Tyerman, and my friend Mr. George Bennet. These consist of about fifty manuscript volumes, which I must bring down to a moderate size for publication. Most of my leisure time for three months has been employed on this work, and it will take at least nine months more to complete it. I, therefore, *must stay at home*, or if I go abroad must take my work with me. Mr. Bennet is at present with his nephew; and if you address him at No. 1. Tryon's Place, Hackney, near London, he will no doubt promptly reply; but I think it must be in the negative, because he has pledged himself to be with his Sheffield friends on Easter Monday. Now I can only add my best thanks to Mrs. Lessey and yourself for kindness, for much kindness, in former days, on such occasions, and if I could with comfort have gone anywhere, I would have preferred where you dwell to any other place. May your dwelling, wherever it be, in your pilgrim-profession, ever be the habitation of the just, which the Lord blesseth! With sincere regards to Mrs. Lessey, I am, truly, your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY."

In the spring of this year Mr. Everett accompanied the Rev. Dr. Adam Clarke to Ireland, for the purpose of purchasing a house there, in order that he might, as he hoped, end his days in his native country. Although this hope was not ultimately realised, the tour was, on many accounts, an agreeable one to both parties; and to one of them at least that portion of it was more particularly interesting which comprehended a visit to the Moravian Settlement at Grace Hill. This place, as stated by one of the visitors in a published narrative*,

* Everett's "Adam Clarke portrayed," vol. iii. p. 438.

was reached by them on the evening of the 3rd of May. "The next day the Moravians celebrated their second jubilee, and first centenary, — having first settled there May 4th, 1730; the celebration was chiefly confined to the single sisters, who had a love-feast on the occasion. To this place James Montgomery, the author of the 'World before the Flood,' was brought from Scotland by his parents, when about three years of age; and here he remained till he reached the age of six. His nephew, and two venerable ladies — aunts of the poet — were resident at the place; and this, together with the presence of several ministers, and the joyousness of the occasion, heightened the pleasure of the visit. John James Montgomery, the nephew, now a Moravian minister in England, was then rising into manhood,—tall, well made, with finely-arched eyebrows, —highly intellectual,—imaginative,—a mind richly cultivated,—good taste,—excellent conversational powers; exhibited in his action, his modes of thinking, and even the inflections of his voice, some of the more expressive characteristics of the poet. He took the writer to the Moravian burying-ground, where

> 'The little heaps were ranged in comely rows,
> With walks between by friends and kindred trod;'

the image of which seemed to have been present with the uncle when describing the 'Burying-place of the Patriarchs,' at the commencement of the fifth canto of the 'World before the Flood.' The grave of his [J. J. M's] grandfather (on the maternal side), and also that of his grandmother — a daughter of the excellent John Gambold, the early friend of Wesley, a Moravian bishop, author of 'Ignatius' and other poems, were pointed out. Thence the steps of the visitor were directed to the abode of the aunts above-mentioned, two

venerable personages, residing together in a clean, neat, thatched cottage, embowered among trees, in the midst of a garden,—themselves the picture of innocence, simplicity, and happiness,— one of them, the eldest, about eighty years of age, strongly resembling the poet about the upper part of the face, and with a brilliant hazel eye. There were two small spinning wheels standing in the room, emblems of industry, and relics of times anterior to the invention of flax and cotton mills. The village, castle, and church of Galgorum were visited in company with Doctor Clarke, who, addressing Mr. Montgomery, said, 'The only point on which I differ with your uncle is, the preference which he gives to Dr. Watts over Charles Wesley as a poet.' He then quoted a hymn which Watts himself had applauded,— 'Wrestling Jacob,'* and dwelt on the superiority of the Wesleyan hymnologist. Mr. Montgomery, to ward off the good-natured stroke, asked whether his uncle did not cede the palm to Watts, chiefly for having led the way to a better form and more elevated style of poetry as to hymns? This the Doctor would not admit. Three of the Moravian ministers joined our party at supper, and strongly pressed Dr. Clarke to preach; but his time was limited, and would not admit of it. Early on the morning of our departure the jubilee commenced by strewing flowers before the doors of the single sisters, both those who were in the insti-

* Montgomery himself accords high praise to this remarkable composition, "in which, with consummate art, the poet has carried on the action of a lyrical drama; every turn in the conflict with the mysterious Being against whom he wrestles all night being marked with precision by the varying language of the speaker, accompanied by intense, increasing interest, till the rapturous moment of discovery, when he prevails, and exclaims, 'I know thee, Saviour, who thou art.'"—*Christian Psalmist.*

tution and those resident with their parents in the village. This being done, the young men of the settlement played several sacred airs and psalm tunes at the four corners of the square, after which the solemnities of public worship commenced." *

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, May 22. 1830.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your letter informing me of the lamented departure of our late admirable friend, the Rev. W. Orme †, came upon me like a thunderbolt, as I had heard, only a few hours before, a report that he was considered out of danger, and his recovery fully anticipated. The Lord does what He will with his servants, and I am persuaded that He always does what is best, both for them and for his own cause on earth. Oh! *to be* his servants, and such servants, whom when He comes He shall find doing their Lord's will, however suddenly He may call them to rest from their labours! The personal intercourse which I had with Mr. Orme gave me a very high idea of his talents, his industry, and his discretion to manage difficult affairs, such as those that he was entrusted with; and I was also deeply impressed with a conviction of his piety, and devotedness to his duties—his Christian duties—of every kind.

"You know, probably, that Mr. Fincher, with a zeal and kindness of friendship which I cannot sufficiently acknowledge, though I am sure I know how to estimate it, has arranged terms for four lectures by me, at the Royal Institution, on four successive Saturdays, beginning on the 29th instant. I purpose (D. V.) being in London on Friday morning, and I must be indebted to the kindness of Mr. M'Coy to

* This festival had, in fact, more especial reference to the date of the formation of the "Single Sisters' Choir," which is annually commemorated in every Moravian community.

† Of Camberwell, Foreign Secretary to the London Missionary Society.

look out for lodgings for me, somewhere about Lincoln's Inn, or a quarter of a mile either way from it.

"A visit to London at this time will enable me to arrange finally respecting the printing the volumes; and as I mean to bring with me the manuscripts, as far as they are completed, and place them in Mr. Hankey's hands, they may go to press in the course of next month.

"Your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq., Tryon's Place, Hackney."

May 7. Montgomery called at the "Iris" office with some portions of the MS. of the "Missionary Journal" for Mr. Holland's revision. *Montgomery:* "I am doing for the Deputation a similar service to that which was done by Dr. Hawksworth in the published account of Captain Cook's 'Voyages.'" *Holland:* "I am afraid you are not to receive a like remuneration, which is said to have been a thousand guineas." *Montgomery:* "I have no objection to tell *you* that I am to have 200*l.* for my work." *Blackwell:* "That is surely but an indifferent recompense for such service." *Montgomery:* "I could certainly have got more money for other things which I might have written in the same time, and with less labour; but when I undertook the work, I expected I should finish it in about eight months, and that the selection of matter, rather than original composition, would chiefly be required: I find, however, the reverse of this to be the case; but I shall do my best, whatever the sacrifice of time may be, as conscientiously as if I were to receive 1000*l.* for my labour." *Holland:* "At any rate the employment must be a pleasant one in several ways." *Montgomery:* "It is; and perhaps the most obvious advantage is, that I am constantly kept at a kind of work which I believe is good for me."

On the 27th of May he left Sheffield for London, to deliver a course of lectures on certain branches of the History of English Literature, before the members of the "Royal Institution of Great Britain." His friends were somewhat surprised at the good spirits with which the poet appeared to encounter the experiment of personally addressing a metropolitan audience; but while he considered it could be no disparagement to his character or genius to try a path which had been so reputably trodden by Coleridge and Campbell, and upon which, it seems, Moore himself repeatedly thought of entering, he had also the advantage of having heard the two poet-lecturers in the same rostrum, and before a similar audience in Albemarle Street. The lectures — delivered in an earnest but unaffected style — were very well received, though little noticed by the press at the time: indeed, the editor of one journal, who heard of the matter "by chance," naturally wondered how it could have been managed so as "to escape the notice of every literary journal and newspaper in London!" Among the auditors was William Sotheby, the author of "Saul," who not only listened with "deep delight" to the oral delivery of the introductory lecture, but borrowed and carried home with him the manuscript for private perusal — returning it with the renewed commendations of himself and Miss Joanna Baillie, and adding, "as a slight mark of his esteem" for the lecturer, copies of his "Polyglot Georgics," and his translation of the "Iliad." Mr. Fincher, the secretary of the Royal Institution, having embraced the opportunity of soliciting from the poet a contribution in verse, to be used in aid of a benevolent society in the metropolis, the object of which was to relieve poor women "during the first month of their widowhood," he wrote for him the poem entitled "An Every-Day

Tale."* During his absence, the anniversary of the Sheffield Sunday School Union was held on Whit-Monday, on which occasion the wonted community of pious feeling between the poet and his friends was recalled by the reading — from the chair — of some suitable stanzas† on the recent death of Mr. Joseph Cowley, one of the secretaries of the institution; an excellent man, who had long served his God with a degree of zeal equal to that with which he had formerly served his king.‡

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"1. Tryon's Place, Hackney,
"June 14. 1830.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have but a minute§ or two to thank you for your kind note of remembrance from Leeds. I am glad to learn that you are going on well in the good work in which you are engaged with hand, and heart, and voice, and that the Lord still blesses *you*, as well as makes you a blessing. His blessing indeed maketh *rich* and addeth no sorrow, and I can from my small experience [testify that] there is no other way of being made rich, without a great deal of care, anxiety, labour, and sorrow; to say nothing of the wings which riches make to themselves wherewith to flee away, and leave their votaries poorer than when they were first without them.

---

* Works, p. 210.

† Original Hymns, CCCXXXIII.

‡ "During the engagement before Toulon, in 1793, he was one of the foremost to jump upon the poop of a French ship, with a boarding pike in his hand, to haul down the Gallic ensign, and bend and hoist a British flag in its place."—Holland's *Memoir of Cowley*.

§ This letter has so evidently the appearance of having been written *currente calamo*, that the words in the text might almost be supposed to be literally applicable.

"I thank you for your kind purposes towards me in respect to lecturing at Leeds. The *substance* of my four lectures here has been already delivered in its original form, as two lectures, at Leeds, by Dr. Williamson, to whom I lent the original manuscripts. How far my three or four lectures on modern British Poets might suit a Leeds audience, I cannot tell. Perhaps I may pass through that town, to Fulneck, in the course of the summer; if I do, I will call on my very good friend, Dr. Williamson, from whom I have repeatedly experienced hospitality. Pray give my best remembrance to him if you have occasion to write to him, and sincere thanks for his obliging disposition on the present overture. Remember me also with best regards to Mr. George Hadfield, your host, at Manchester. My readings at the Royal Institution have been well received,—indeed, better each time, and by larger audiences also each time. Mr. and Mrs. M'Coy are so exceedingly good to me here that I know not how to acknowledge their kindness. There is only *One* who can reward them for it, and *He will.* If mine were 'the effectual fervent prayers of a righteous man,' they should have the utmost benefit of them. Such as my poor intercessions for them are, I gratefully offer them to the Lord, who has inclined them to show good-will to me, and who will take to bless them in one way or another for it. Mr. Fincher has been very attentive to serve me.

"I am truly,

"Your affectionate friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"George Bennet, Esq.,
at G. Hadfield's, Esq., Manchester."

James Montgomery to George Bennet.

"Sheffield, Aug. 16. 1830.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your two last letters touched my best sympathies more directly than any which I had before received from you since your return to England. In your sorrows as well as your joys I am willing, I am happy, to bear a part; and it will do you good, occasionally at least, to hint at the

former, as well as to dwell upon the latter. I cannot have known you so long, and in many respects so well, without being aware that you are of like passions with myself, and that your heart must sometimes be secretly exercised with anguish of its own, when your face wears the smile of kindness to those around you; or the tranquillity of resignation settles on your brow, while the Lord is, in very faithfulness, afflicting you. Be assured that I would rather feel any pangs, which the responding accordance of heart to heart, 'as lute to lute,' may give me, at the knowledge of your mercifully-mitigated and graciously-inflicted sorrows, than be so stupid as not to remember that you must have such, if you are a child of God; or so indifferent as not to feel something sweeter than selfish pleasure in being allowed to taste with you of the wormwood as well as of the honey of your cup. It is the cup which your Father hath given you to drink; and every draught must be a mingled one; hence the very bitterness is cordial as well as medicinal. The new wine, the pure, must not be tasted till you drink it in his kingdom. Your letter from Liverpool, received yesterday by Dr. Wardlaw, gave me great delight, however; for, after all, it is better to hear glad than heavy tidings from friends; but, without the former, the latter would not be nearly so joyous. You have met there, and at Manchester, with the warmth and freshness of unsophisticated friendship, which has made you at home, and restored you to yourself, your former self, your better self. I congratulate you on the happiness which you have been permitted to communicate as well as to share. But do not let any influence of friends, and friends to the cause, prevail upon you to commit yourself to publish, in any form, such intelligence as you give from personal knowledge respecting the work of God in distant lands, visited by you on your missionary voyage. It is natural and amiable in them to desire to see the interesting narratives in print; but were you to write them twice as well as you tell them, they would not please half so well as they do from your lips and from your heart. Were you to attempt it you would pro-

bably soon grow weary; you little know the labour and anxiety of attention necessary to cater for a reading public Besides, nothing must be done by any of us who are concerned with the forthcoming Journal, which can give *a pretence* to others to say, if it fails, or if it disappoints unreasonable expectation (as it will assuredly, though I am equally sure that reasonable expectation ought not to be disappointed), that its success was prevented or hindered in any way by our anticipation of its best contents. I begin to be impatient that I hear nothing about the manuscript — which I left in Mr. Hankey's hands *two months ago* — being sent to the publishers. Mr. Hodgson, Mr. Roberts, Misses Gales, all desire their best remembrances to you, and are glad to hear of your well-being and your well-doing. Better may you be, and better may you do, till the best of all comes, and may that be the last, when to die shall be gain! My kindest and most grateful regards to Mr. and Mrs. M'Coy; and love to Poteiti*, — which I may safely send to such a little lady, as it will be so long before she can take any advantage of it, that I shall probably have escaped beyond her reach ere then.†

[No signature.]

"George Bennet, Esq., Tryon's Place, Hackney."

On the 19th of August, a boat, containing a pleasure party, was upset on the river Ouse, near York, when

* The Tahitian appellation of a babe at the breast, literally signifying *little milk-sucker*, and applied by Mr. Bennet to his nephew's child.

† He repeatedly mentions this interesting girl in his letters to her relative. "The lilies send their love to Poteiti, and desire me to say that she must make good use of her time, or they will outgrow her, being determined not to lose another moment of theirs now they have been enabled to peep out of their dark winter beds, though they would much rather be in Tryon's Place, amidst the sunshine and green fields, than in the black Hartshead." Five years before the date of the above letter the poet had written the following sweet verses in a baby-album bearing her name:—

seven individuals, six of them young persons belonging to one family, perished. Their friends having resolved

---

"*Po-te-iti M'Coy.*

"'Whoso shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'—*Matt.* xviii. 4.

"A little child!—who dare despise
These little ones of thine?
Precious, Lord Jesus, in thine eyes,
May they be so in mine!

"For such an one, 'twixt hope and fear,
On this unwritten book,
With joy—whose emblem is a tear
Sparkling in grief—I look.

"For pure and lovely as thou art,
Meek innocent, to-day,
My heart can see in *thy* young heart
A poor frail child of clay.

"All I have felt and mourned within,
Through many a bitter year,—
The rank unquickened seeds of sin,—
Must soon in thee appear.

"O may the grace that followed me,
Along thy path be seen!
But thou — but thou more faithful be
Than I — than I have been.

"Art thou a father's child? then live
To gladden long his sight:
Art thou a mother's child? then give
Her bosom true delight.

"In wisdom, as in stature, grow;
In love, joy, hope increase;
Stayed be thy mind on God below,
And kept in perfect peace.

"Though time bring years and changes fast,—
Simple, yet unbeguiled,
In Christ's sweet language, to the last,
Be thou 'a little child!'

"Nov. 16. 1825."

to erect, by subscription, a monument in memory of the sufferers, Montgomery was applied to for an inscription, when he wrote the following lines, which appear on a marble tablet in the churchyard of St. Lawrence:—

"Raised by friendship, in memory of four sons and two daughters of JOHN and ANN RIGG, of this city; viz. ANN GUTHRIE RIGG, aged 19 years; ELIZA RIGG, aged 17; THOMAS GORWOOD RIGG, aged 18; JOHN RIGG, aged 16; JAMES SMITH RIGG, aged 7; and CHARLES RIGG, aged 6; who were drowned by their boat being run down on the river Ouse, near York, August 19. 1830.

"Mark the brief story of a Summer's Day!
At noon, Youth, Health, and Beauty launched away;
Ere eve, Death wrecked the bark, and quenched their light;
Their Parents' home was desolate at night:
Each passed, alone, that gulf no eye can see;
They met, next moment, in Eternity.
Friend, Kinsman, Stranger, dost thou ask me Where?
Seek God's right hand, and hope to find them There."

On the 27th of August a public meeting was held in the Town Hall at Sheffield, for the purpose of considering the propriety of presenting some memento of local respect to Lord Milton for his services to his constituents during twenty-three years that he had represented the county of York in Parliament. Although Montgomery's name does not appear among those in the requisition to the Master Cutler for calling the meeting, he was not only present, but, at the request of the conveners, he moved the principal resolution, to the effect that a piece of plate should be presented to his lordship. He spoke at considerable length; the politics as well as the personal character of his noble friend being such as he could conscientiously dwell upon with commendation. Adverting to his

lordship's opinions on Parliamentary Reform, at a period when the subject was less popular than at this moment, the speaker praised his noble friend for the frankness and the firmness with which he expressed himself *then*, no less than for his candid avowal of the altered views which he *now* entertained on that important question. "Lord Milton," said he, "has acted as an honest man: he always refused to sell himself to the crown, or yield to the clamours of the people;"— terms which were never inapplicable to him even after he became Earl Fitzwilliam. One other remark made by Montgomery on the occasion referred to we venture to perpetuate in this page:—"I have," said he, "changed my opinion relative to the aristocracy representing counties; for when I look at the conduct of Lord Wharncliffe at the time he was our representative, and that of the noble lord who is the subject of this meeting, I think it is for the good of the country that younger branches of the aristocracy should thus be engrafted, for awhile, on the stock of the democracy. I believe that Lord Wharncliffe and Lord Milton will both make better members of the Upper House for having been representatives of a county than if they had sat in the Commons for Higham Ferrars and Bossiney." This was, perhaps, the last occasion on which, after the resignation of his newspaper, he made any direct avowal of political opinions at a public meeting.

A few days afterwards, Lord Milton dined at the Cutlers' Feast, and along with him Lord Morpeth, to whom, we believe, Montgomery was then for the first time introduced; and brief and desultory as was the greeting on this occasion, the frankness, amiability, intelligence, and refined taste of a young nobleman who has not hesitated, amid the sneers of political rivals, to follow the example of his grandfather in courting the

favour of the Muses, though allied by birth, rank, and title to those who could only boast with him their share in "all the blood of all the Howards," made an indelible impression on the mind of our poet. This feeling was evidently reciprocal. Lord Morpeth requested to be allowed to propose the health of Montgomery, in doing which he adverted, in a delicate and graceful speech, to "the genius and virtues of the bard, who, having scaled the heights of Parnassus, had with equal success directed his poetical footsteps towards the holier elevation of Mount Zion." Montgomery, evidently affected by the unexpected introduction of his name, after alluding to the cordiality which had subsisted between himself and the inhabitants of the town of Sheffield for more than thirty years, added, that as in various excursions to the poetical regions of the fabled Parnassus his townsmen had accompanied him, so he was anxious that they should likewise, and more especially, ascend with him that nobler and holier elevation mentioned by Lord Morpeth,— Mount Zion. "And I am not ashamed," added he, "in this festive meeting to say, with reference to that place which has been the subject of my later themes,— God grant we may all meet there!"

The Rev. Dr. Milnor, rector of St. George's Chapel, New York, and one of the most popular Evangelical preachers in that city, visited England, this summer, as the representative of the American Bible Society and several kindred institutions. Having closed his official engagements in the metropolis, he spent a few days in Sheffield, during which he enjoyed repeated interviews with Montgomery. It was the privilege of Mr. Holland to be present on several of these occasions, and he can never forget the cordial and fervid interchange of friendly sentiments and religious sympathy which at

once indicated and cemented "the generous confidence of kindred souls" between the Christian poet and the distinguished Transatlantic divine. The latter left a record of this brief sojourn among his Hallamshire friends in his journal*, which shows how feelingly he reciprocated the kindness with which they had welcomed and entertained him. While in Sheffield, Dr. Milnor attended a Bible Society meeting, and spoke for nearly an hour, giving an account of kindred institutions in America. After recording the circumstance in his diary, he adds, "Mr. Montgomery made the closing speech, with a warm glow of religious feeling and an affectionate importunity of expression. His only difficulty seemed to lie in finding vent for the flood of ideas that constantly rushed into his mind. This made him occasionally stammer for a moment; but a short pause always restored his self-possession, and his plain but forcible delivery riveted the attention of his hearers. His acknowledgments to myself were full of Christian warmth and affection, and his allusions to my country of most touching interest."† In another entry — "I had parted with Mr. Montgomery," he says, "at his own house, just before evening service yesterday, when I took tea and passed an hour and a half in delightful communion of feeling with this gifted poet and most devoted Christian. I experienced, in parting from him, much of that painful emotion which I am now, toward the close of my visit to England, so often obliged to suffer, and which is excited by the thoughts of taking my last leave in this world of some of the most estimable men who tread its surface." But with some of them —

* Large extracts from which are published in the highly interesting "Memoir of the Life of James Milnor, D.D., by the Rev. Dr. Stone."

† Stone's "Memoir of Milnor."

and Montgomery was of the number—the delightful intercourse thus personally closed was renewed by letter.

The reader will not have failed to notice the striking, often elegant, and always apposite similes which occur in Montgomery's letters,—even in those relating to mere business matters. In a letter of this class addressed to Mr. Bennet, Oct. 5. 1830, he says:—

"Mr. Hodgson is, I hope, thoroughly restored to health, and gaining strength daily—both health and strength, I pray that he may be permitted to consecrate, for many years to come, to the service of that best of Masters, in which he and you find 'perfect freedom.' Would that I could do the same; but I make bonds for myself—not such as Agabus made when he bound himself with Paul's girdle*, but such as the Jews made when they fulfilled the prophecy of Agabus. The latter could unloose the knots which he tied about his own hands and feet; but I can tie and not unloose, being in this respect '*the Jews*' to myself; indeed, a hundred Jews could not manacle and lame me more when I ought to be walking, and working, and bearing the burthens of the Lord instead of my own."

The accession of William the Fourth to the throne, favourable as he was known to be to the views of the Reform party in general, and especially to that entire abolition of Negro Slavery which, as well on moral as on political grounds, was advocated by a still larger portion of the community, and the consequent opportunity of demanding pledges in favour of immediate emancipation from candidates for seats in the first Parliament of the new reign, gave great encouragement to the friends of universal freedom. Three of the four individuals who aspired to represent the great county

* Acts xxi. 11.

of York,—Mr. Brougham, Mr. Bethell, and Mr. Duncombe,—respectively laid more or less stress on that subject in their speeches at Sheffield; while they were alike personally anxious that Montgomery should be convinced of the sincerity of their public avowals. On the 27th of October, a very large meeting was held at the Cutlers' Hall, in favour of total abolition, when petitions to that effect, as drawn up by the poet, were unanimously adopted, and, after lying for signature for some days, were by him transmitted to members of both Houses of Parliament for presentation. At the meeting he spoke with unusual fervour and effect; especially when describing that horrible instrument, the slave-whip, in connection with a recent instance of the use of it, involving more than ordinary atrocity. He mentioned that he had attended all the meetings on the subject in Sheffield during the preceding thirty years, and signed every petition emanating from them.

Early in September his friend Miss Rowntree reminded him of the season for visiting Scarborough, in a letter the opening sentence of which was as follows:—

"I felt so much pain on reading thy last letter, that I almost wished for the power of becoming, for a short time, a bird—a robin redbreast, in which form I would have flown over to Sheffield, watched the opening of thy study window, and, entering without ceremony, would have perched at thy elbow! I then fancied thee turning round, and saying, 'Ah! you little rogue, where are you come from?' I would then have told thee how brightly the sun shone upon our rocks and cliffs; how beautiful and sublime our waves; how warm were the kind wishes of thy friends," &c.

This will explain the allusions in the first part of the following letter:—

James Montgomery to Miss Rowntree.

"Sheffield, Nov. 4. 1830.

"My dear Friend,

"Your pleasant letter from Scarboro' of the '6th of 9th mo.' deserved a sprightlier answer than I had spirits to send, as well as a more grateful one than I had words to indite. If I had been a robin redbreast, I should certainly have made a reply in kind, as it seems you understand the language of that poetical bird, in those low, sweet, ear-thrilling, and heart-touching notes, which, at the fall of the leaf, we are wont to hear warbled in slight descants, not only in the depth of woods, but near the habitations of man, from brown hedges, the tops of haystacks, or the eaves of cottages, amidst the clear warm sunshine of 'the last autumnal days,' such as we have had during the reign of the present moon,—the kindliest and loveliest moon of all the year. What my answer would then have been, you may know by writing down in plain English what you would have wished it to be from one who, whatever his failings may be, has occasion for the pity and forbearance of his best friends, and their forgiveness even, when he does his best to comply with their desires to gratify him, yet seems unthankful, because he cannot, from perverse infirmity, express his real thankfulness. But had I been a bird of another feather, with which also you seem to be acquainted, I would have flown without resting from Sheffield to Scarboro' after the precious cargo which you say you would have borne away. What I might have done when I got there, and recovered my stolen goods, I know not; but if I had fallen into the clutches of your sea-side philosophers, to whom (so said the newspapers) a live eagle was given for their museum, I should have done precisely what the royal captive did, when they met in dire conspiracy to kill him, —namely, while they were deliberating, he disentangled his legs, and shot upward through the skylight, leaving the wise men of S. in the uttermost astonishment at the liberty he had taken! Now this is either true, or *ought to have*

been, it is so good a story; and I heartily wish that eagle may live a hundred years after the death of the longest liver among them, even if my good friend Dr. Murray were one, which I hope he was, that he may have the pleasure of delighting his friends of the next generation with the recital of that most memorable event in the history of science on the eastern coast of Yorkshire. But indeed when your letter arrived I was so fast bound, that the wise men of Gotham themselves might have killed and stuffed me for their museum, and placed me next to the cuckoo, which they hedged in (though I do not recollect that they succeeded in that attempt), and ever since (except for ten days at my brother's in Derbyshire) I have been toiling at the oar on my voyage of *eight years* round the world—on which I set out last winter, and hoped to have accomplished it in little more than *twelve months;* but many interruptions, more in the shape of calms than storms, have prevented me from making good way. I have yet nearly one third to bring up—of course I allude to my preparation of two volumes from the journal of Messrs. Tyerman and Bennet, which has already cost twice the labour on which I calculated. Other local and literary engagements keep me in continual hurry and arrear, and discourage me from undertaking any voluntary exercise, and most of all (I think, yet I know not exactly why it is so) make me reluctant to write letters to my dearest friends, having more correspondence forced upon me from strange quarters than is consistent either with my convenience or comfort. All this time I seem to have forgotten your last letter—but not so; I have been trying to get at it in every line of this, notwithstanding all the waste of words in the first two pages. It came duly to hand, and should have been immediately acknowledged, but you volunteered a delay in my favour, and I know you would not be uneasy respecting the safe delivery of its precious contents (12*l.*). For them I do thank you, not in words, nor for myself only, but the language of my heart is the expression of the gratitude of *the thousands* of brethren and sisters of our small European Church, and of the *tens of thousands* of our brethren and sisters gathered from among

the Gentiles, in Greenland, Labrador, the West Indies, North America, and South Africa,—to you, and to all those whom the Lord hath given willing minds and liberal hands to help his cause on earth.

"This is the anniversary of my birthday. I am fifty-nine years old; an awful age, and yet, to look back, only as yesterday and to-day, with the certainty that to-morrow it will be at an end. There is but one, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' May you and I and all whom we love be his! then 'though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he *is*.' Meanwhile let us endeavour more and more to resemble Him *now*; then shall we be satisfied, when we wake up in his likeness.

"With kindest regards to your honoured mother and esteemed brothers, I am truly, your obliged friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Miss E. Rowntree, York."

James Montgomery to James Everett.

"Sheffield, Dec 27, 1830.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I have *just* ascertained that you have been invited and expected to attend and assist at the opening of the Park Methodist Chapel. I write *immediately* to request you to oblige me by taking up your quarters here in the Hartshead, where you will be most welcome, and all that kindness can do to make you feel at home will be done by Misses Gales and myself. I owe you a long letter or two, but as I have no time to write such things, come and I will talk up my arrears, for my tongue is readier than my pen, and my pen is almost worn out with other work than letter-writing, which I will explain when you come, and answer any reasonable question on any reasonable subject. Misses Gales join in best regards to Mrs. Everett and yourself.

"I am truly your friend,

"J. MONTGOMERY.

"Mr. James Everett, Manchester."

As we have mentioned in a previous volume, one of the most frank, lively, and intelligent of Montgomery's correspondents of the gentle sex was Mrs. Basil Montague. At the close of the present year, this lady addressed the poet, at the request of her husband, in favour of a scheme of his for the erection of a monument to the memory of Thomas Clarkson. This letter, probably the last in which she recurred to the days of early friendship, concluded with the following expressive passage:—

"I regret very much that all the pleasant intercourse I had with you by letter has faded away—faded, as I have faded, by the chilling hand of Time,—not by any blow more sudden or unkind: this leaves me poor, but uncomplaining. I see all things pass away; great nations have changed their forms of government, and mighty rivers have deserted their former channels: at any rate, you are not forgotten. You have my best wishes—and those are my prayers: and He who is Himself the only source of charity and love, measures not the worth of the suppliant, but the truth and fervour of the aspiration. You walked hand in hand with Liberty in the paths of truth, but God gave you, by his grace, that diviner liberty which emancipates the soul of fallen man from all his bonds. One step forward in pride—unregenerate pride, and you would have stiffened in all the strength of self-will, and have become a Milton, or even a Cromwell, than whom Satan himself could not, in *will*, be prouder. Let us be thankful for such a brand snatched from the fire, to be laid thenceforth upon the altar: never before did a martyr purely political become a character purely religious."

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

LONDON:
A. and G. A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-street-Square.